PRIMA'S OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

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MICROPROSE

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION V

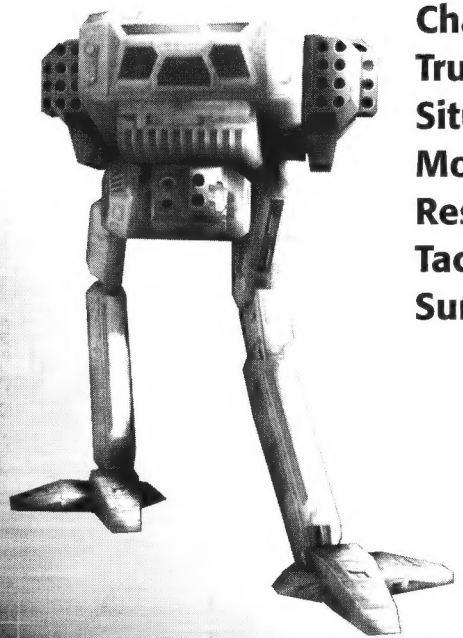
PART I VI

Chapter 1: Introduction to 'Mech Piloting 1
Overview of a Mission 2
Skills for Success 5
Improving as a MechWarrior 9

Chapter 2: Weapons and Equipment 13
Weapons 14
Equipment 47
New Weapons 54
Tables 63

Chapter 3: 'Mechs and Vehicles 67
Light BattleMechs 68
Medium BattleMechs 74
Heavy BattleMechs 86
Assault BattleMechs 96
Vehicles 105
New BattleMechs 107

Chapter 4: Combat 119
Truisms of 'Mech Combat 120
Situational Awareness 101 131
Movement 134
Resource Management 136
Tactics 140
Summary 147



PART II 148

Chapter 5: Campaign, Missions 1–3 149
Mission 1 153
Mission 2 157
Mission 3 163
Chapter 6: Campaign, Missions 4–6 171
Mission 4 172
Mission 5 177
Mission 6 183
Chapter 7: Campaign, Missions 7–10 189
Mission 7 190
Mission 8 196
Mission 9 201
Mission 10 206

PART III 212

Chapter 8: Pirate Missions 1–3 213
Mission 1 214
Mission 2 218
Mission 3 223
Chapter 9: Pirate Missions 4–6 229
Mission 4 230
Mission 5 235
Mission 6 239
Chapter 10: Pirate Missions 7–10 245
Mission 7 246
Mission 8 251
Mission 9 256
Mission 10 260
Chapter 11: Multiplayer Tips 267
What to Expect 268
How to Improve 271
Bonus Mission 277

INTRODUCTION

Being a MechWarrior just got a lot tougher. The challenges of *MechWarrior III* are behind you—and now you find yourself on Veil, a barren husk of a mining planet, performing guard duty that seems routine. But these missions are far from routine. This unassuming backdrop plays host to some of the meanest, deadliest, and most skillful pirates that you've ever seen. Prepare yourself for a challenge.

On the flip side, you also get a chance to *be* a pirate. And if we daresay, the pirate missions are actually *tougher* than the standard campaign.

This book helps you navigate the dangerous canyons of Veil with authority, and attack your enemy with a sound battle plan. We can't help your 'Mech shoot straighter or run faster, but we do everything short of that to help you attain your goals.

Part I of this book contains general information on 'Mechs, 'Mech tactics, and 'Mech combat. Some of this information is familiar to you, because it applies both to the original *MechWarrior III* and to *Pirate's Moon*. Of course, these chapters have been fully updated to include the new 'Mechs and weapons of *Pirate's Moon*.

Part II covers the main campaign of *Pirate's Moon*. It's a tough campaign, but not overwhelming—especially with this book to help you.

Part III covers the pirate missions and multiplayer games. You'll find the pirate missions to actually be tougher than the main campaign; several of the missions feature combat that's incredibly challenging, especially on High difficulty. Don't worry, though—we help you make sense of even the most bewildering pirate missions.

Pirate's Moon is a deadly place, but with the help of this guide, you'll eventually master it.

PART I

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO 'MECH PILOTING

PILOTING A 60-TON BATTLEMECH isn't an easy task. What's more, during the course of *Pirate's Moon*, you'll be expected not only to pilot a BattleMech through dangerous situations, but also to follow complex orders that can change over the course of the mission. In addition to controlling your own 'Mech, you'll find yourself leading a variable number of lance-mates and Mobile Field Bases as you proceed through various tactical operations. It's not an easy job!

This chapter gives you an overview of the difficulties you'll face, and also gives you a sense of the skills you'll need to succeed. *Pirate's Moon* isn't a simple game of running and shooting; it's a complex simulation consisting of many distinct elements. Figuring out which elements to focus on, and how to improve your performance in each element, is key to mastering the game. Read on to learn more.

TIP

The pirate missions are thematically linked, but there's no salvage, and no strict continuity between one mission and another. Thus, you'll have to check before each mission to see what resources are available to you.

OVERVIEW OF A MISSION

The main campaign consists of a long series of missions. You'll progress through these missions in a linear fashion, facing new challenges at each step and trying to incorporate the new 'Mechs, weapons, and MechWarriors gained from previous missions into your plan of attack.

Here's a look at the main stages of a mission.

BRIEFING

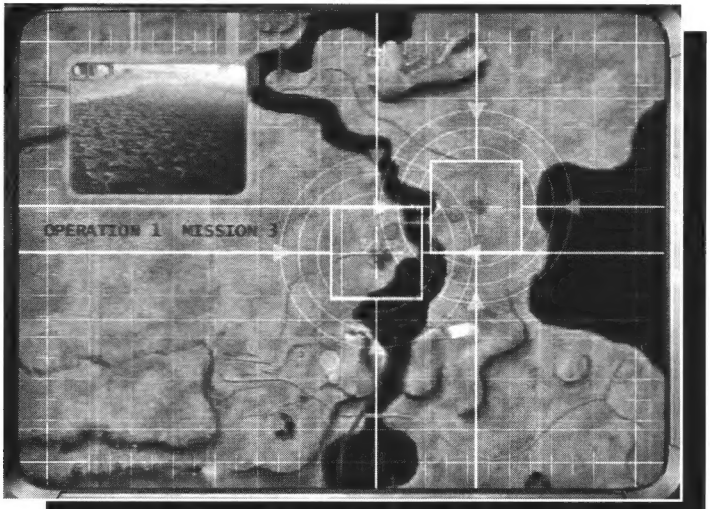


Figure 1-1. The mission briefing outlines your goals and warns you of potential threats.

The mission briefing consists of both an audio voice-over explaining your mission goals, and a map displaying the terrain on which you'll be fighting.

If you view the briefing as a mere formality that you must endure before the action starts, you'll probably have a difficult time executing your goals. The briefing gives you

valuable information on the terrain you'll be facing, the enemies you'll likely encounter, and the goals you must achieve to succeed. Ignoring this information is a dangerous proposition.

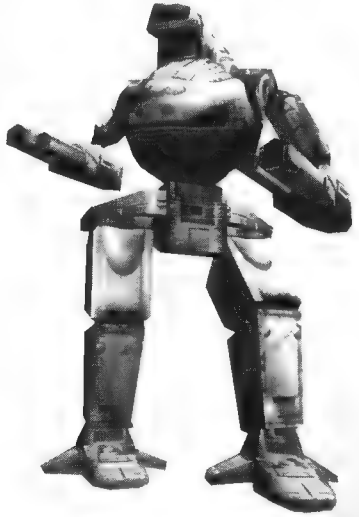
Although you need to pay close attention to the mission briefing, be aware that it's seldom if ever complete. The primary targets and major terrain features are almost always accurate, but the briefing seldom prepares you for every enemy you'll encounter. Your commanders don't have access to complete enough military intelligence for that; you'll have to prepare for a few surprises.

THE 'MECH LAB

Figure 1-2. Clicking on the middle icon (the one with the wrench) takes you to the 'Mech Lab.

Figure 1-3. The 'Mech Lab allows you to change details like weapons and equipment, and also modify big features like armor and engine type.

After viewing the mission briefing, you'll want to customize your BattleMech, plus the BattleMechs of any lancemates that will accompany you on your mission. This is an extremely important facet of the game—in fact, building a 'Mech that suits your fighting style is every bit as important as learning good combat skills. 'Mechs with an unwieldy set of weapons, 'Mechs without enough armor and defensive gear, and 'Mechs without enough heat sinks are all examples of problems than may occur if you don't design your BattleMechs with care.



ACTION

Figure 1-4. After launch, you're dropped into the battlefield.

After customizing your 'Mechs, you're ready to launch. You're placed on the battlefield; it's now time to put your plans into action and accomplish your goals. This is what you've been preparing for!

There are several keys to succeeding in the mission itself, all of which are discussed later in this chapter.

SALVAGE ALLOCATION

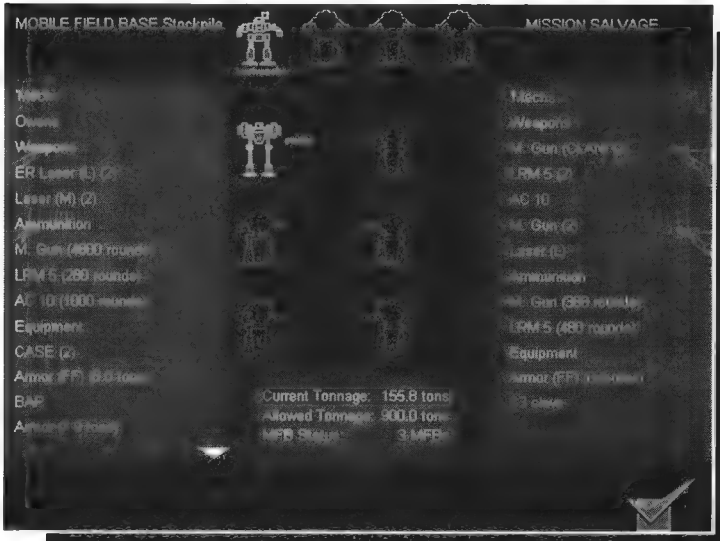


Figure 1-5. Allocating salvage is easy in early missions, but more difficult in later missions, when you won't have room for everything.

TIP

Choosing which salvage to keep is easier if you pay close attention to the weapons and 'Mechs you enjoy using, and make a mental note of those you dislike. Try to be critical as you try out new 'Mechs and weapons, so you can discard whatever you dislike when the time comes to choose.

After the mission ends, hopefully in victory, it's off to the next mission. But before you jump into the next mission, you have to decide which 'Mechs and gear salvaged from the completed mission to stow in your MFBs and take with you.

You need to choose because there's limited space and tonnage in the MFBs. You won't have to make many decisions in the early missions (when you won't have much salvage), but this process becomes more involved later on, when you've collected a vast amount of gear. Then, you may find yourself faced with some genuinely tough decisions.

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

There are many skills that help make you a better MechWarrior. Here's a look at some of the most crucial. (All of these skills are discussed at length later in this book.)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR GOALS

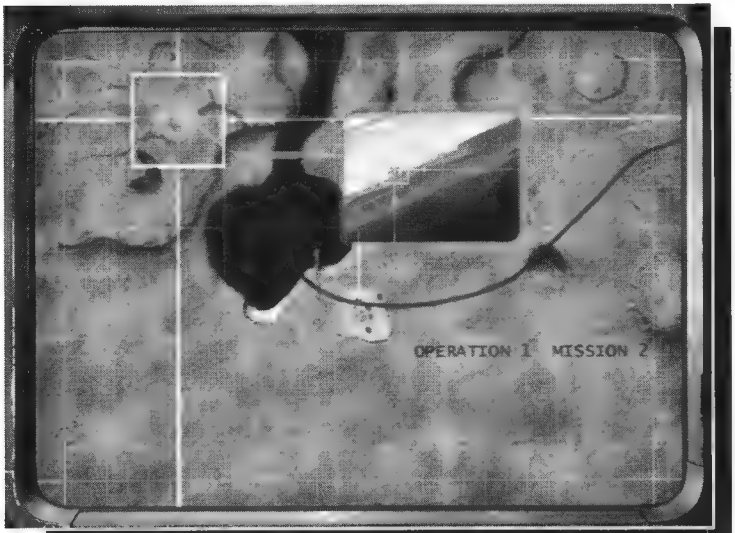


Figure 1-6. Paying close attention to the briefing is crucial to success.

The first key to success is understanding your goals. This often involves reading between the lines of the mission briefing. For example, if you need to take out a missile emplacement that only has a limited arc of fire, you'll probably want to approach the emplacement from a direction outside that arc. If you're supposed to stop a convoy that's heading from Point A to Point B, you might want to place your 'Mechs somewhere

between Points A and B and block the convoy's path, rather than just walking to Point A and then chasing the convoy as soon as it's spotted.

It's also important to remember that mission goals don't have to be completed in order. Sometimes it's best to attack a mission in the obvious fashion, proceeding from one navigation point to the next in sequence. In other missions, it doesn't really matter in what order you accomplish your goals. And in a few missions, it really pays off to accomplish your goals in reverse order. Be flexible enough to try alternate strategies, and you'll have an easier time accomplishing your goals.

BUILDING A BETTER 'MECH

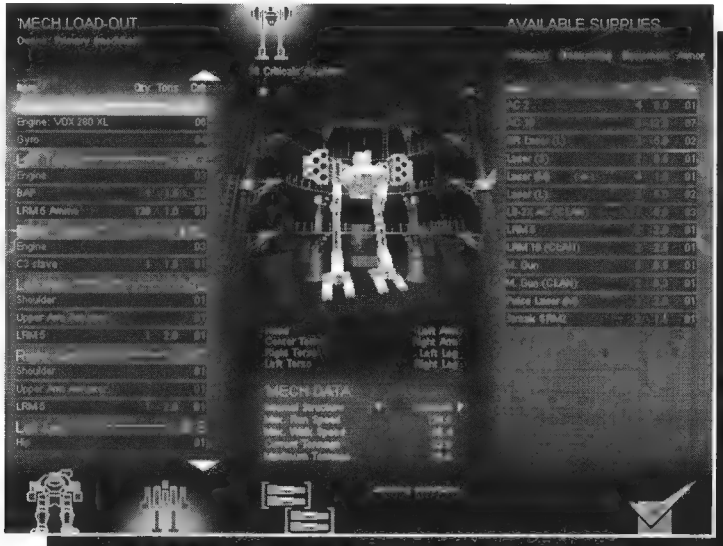


Figure 1-7. The 'Mech Lab is crucial. Plan to spend some time there.

Another key to success is building BattleMechs that are capable and combat-ready. There's a lot of room for creativity and personal decisions when customizing 'Mechs, but there are also a few rules that should never be broken—at least, not until you're experienced enough to know the full ramifications of what you're doing.

Chapter 4 is devoted to helping you build better 'Mechs.

IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

We've already touched on this concept briefly under "Understanding Your Goals," but it bears repeating: A plan is essential to every MechWarrior's success. Relying on raw combat skills alone won't get you very far. Just as important as the ability to gun down enemies are the abilities to make sound decisions and

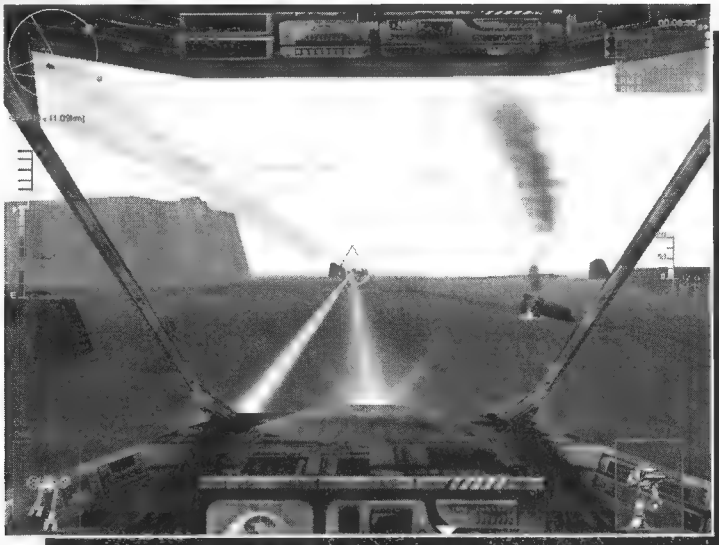


Figure 1-8. Having a solid plan of attack, not just good combat skills, is the key to victory.

approach enemies in a way that minimizes your risk. Charging headlong into a swarm of enemies is a surefire way to lose a 'Mech. You have to devise alternate ways of approaching groups of enemies, using tactics like baiting them into traps, distracting them with lancemates, and picking them slowly apart with long-range fire.

MODIFYING THE PLAN

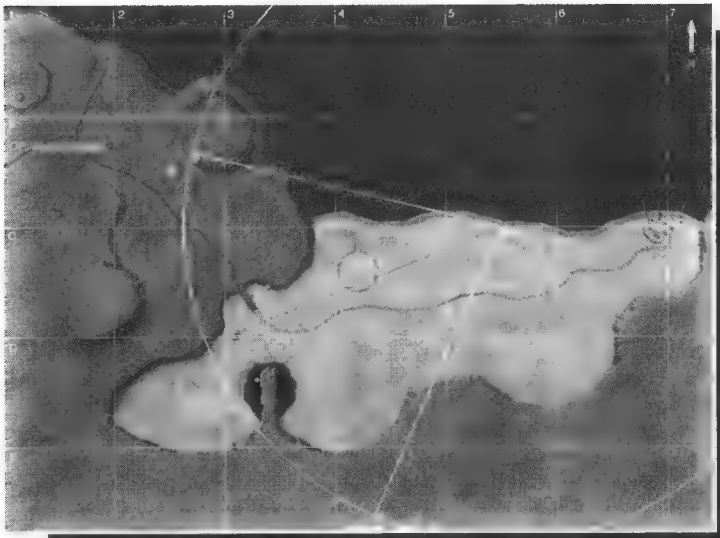


Figure 1-9. Don't be afraid to make changes to your plans, especially when the combat landscape changes—as when a new enemy appears.

No matter how good your plan is, you'll sometimes have to modify it. Sometimes something appears in mid-mission that makes you change your mind: An unexpected group of enemies guarding a mountain pass, for example, might convince you to take another, safer path. Sometimes you'll fail a mission outright, and you'll have to try it again. If that's the case,

you have to determine whether your plan is faulty and needs to be changed, or whether it's sound and you just have to execute it better next time.

TIP

Falling victim to a lucky shot or coming within an inch of your goals usually means that you just need to fight better next time. Getting overwhelmed usually indicates that a change of plans is necessary.

INCORPORATING NEW ASSETS

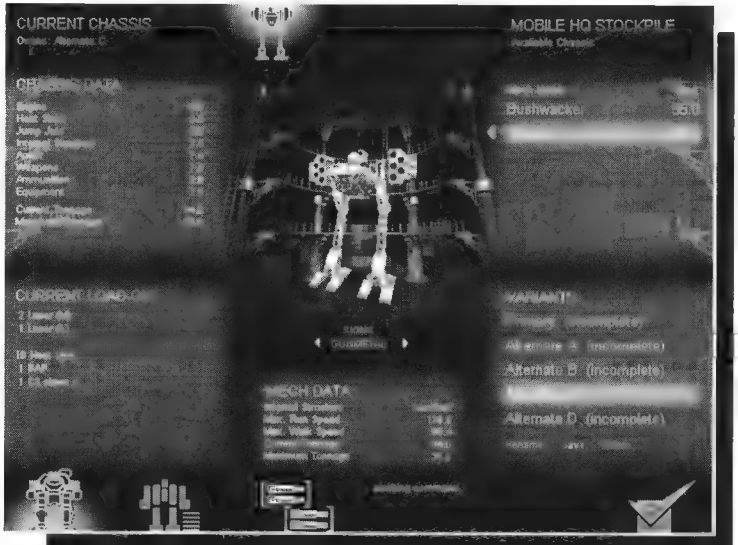


Figure 1-10. New 'Mechs like this Owens open up new possibilities.

A final skill is learning how best to integrate new MechWarriors, 'Mechs, weapons and equipment into your battle plans. This might seem like a simple matter of using the best 'Mechs and gear that you collect, but it's not always so simple. For example, you may collect a great new weapon but not enough ammo to fire it repeatedly. In this case you have to decide whether to use the weapon immediately or wait until you have more ammo for it. Decisions of this sort are common, and are discussed further in Chapter 4.

IMPROVING AS A MECHWARRIOR

Now that we've touched on some of the challenges that await you, and the skills you'll need to succeed, we'll finish with a few suggestions on how to actually develop those skills.

UNDERSTAND THE ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1-11. The battlefield is complex, but you'll gain a better sense of it with experience.

The first step toward improvement is developing a greater understanding of your environment. We're not talking about trees and flowers—instead, we're referring to the *combat* environment.

Understanding the combat environment is a big task, and it's never completely done. There's always some new nuance to learn. Experience is the best teacher. Pay attention as you accomplish your mission goals, taking careful note of subtle things like how quickly a particular enemy 'Mech can maneuver, where to aim when leading a running target, how many shots with your Pulse Laser it takes to destroy an APC ... the more you know about these things, the more you'll understand what you need to do to beat a mission.

This book is also a great resource for learning more about the combat environment. Chapter 2 gives you an overview of the weapons and systems you can load onto your 'Mech, while Chapter 3 gives details on the 'Mechs and vehicles you'll face on the battlefield. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 all point out certain truths about the combat environment (such as the fact that it's difficult to juggle multiple weapon groups, and that most battles naturally tend to move to medium-close range) that will help you to succeed.

IMPROVE YOUR COMBAT SKILLS

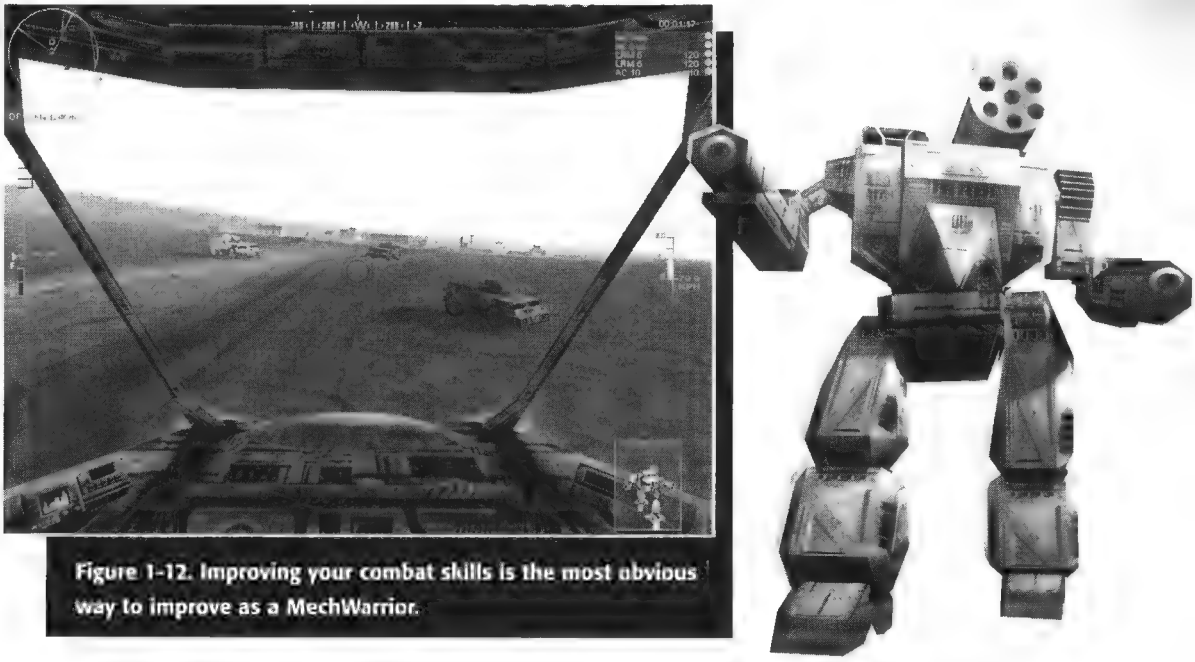


Figure 1-12. Improving your combat skills is the most obvious way to improve as a MechWarrior.

Perhaps the most obvious way to improve as a MechWarrior is to improve your combat skills. Improving in this area involves a number of things, including:

- Practicing until maneuvering your BattleMech is second nature
- Testing various weapons so you know how fast their projectiles are and therefore, how much to lead a target
- Learning at what ranges to fire weapons
- Mastering your targeting controls, so you can quickly target the appropriate enemy
- Using systems like jump jets and coolant flushes in the midst of combat, without fumbling for the proper key

These are only a few of the skills you'll need to develop to improve your combat skills. They also happen to be skills in the purest sense—they're physical skills that you can only master with practice. But there's also another major component to improving your combat skills, and that's good decision making.

MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

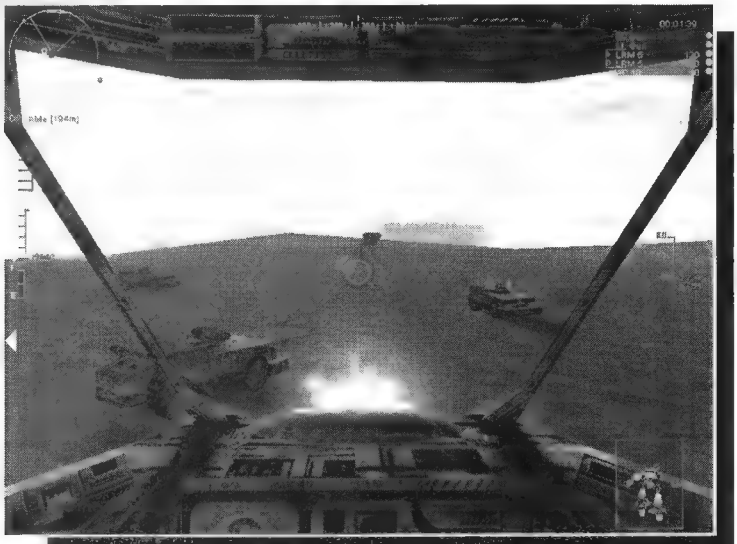


Figure 1-13. Stumbling into the midst of several Smoke Jaguars is usually the result of a poor decision.

The best MechWarriors aren't always the best shots or the most skillful pilots. Sometimes they're just extremely good at making successful combat decisions. They always try to enter combat when it's favorable to them, and back off when conditions aren't right.

As a MechWarrior, much of your decision making is geared toward minimizing damage to your 'Mech. You usually can't physically avoid your enemies, at least not throughout an entire mission. What you *can* do, however, is try to limit the number of enemies you face at one time. That allows you to concentrate on one foe at a time, and also gives you time to periodically retreat to your MFBs for repairs. Chapters 5 and 6 explain this concept in detail, and Chapter 6 presents several tactics you can use to minimize the number of enemies you'll face at once.

USE THIS BOOK!

As we've already mentioned, this book is a valuable resource for the aspiring MechWarrior. Read it thoroughly to get helpful tips on every aspect of *Pirate's Moon,* as well as complete walkthroughs of every mission if you find yourself stuck.

Pirate's Moon is a complex game, and there's no easy recipe for success. But by reading this book, you'll prepare yourself well for the challenges that lie ahead, and you'll avoid much of the confusion that normally confronts a novice MechWarrior.

CHAPTER 2
WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

THIS CHAPTER REVIEWS every weapon and piece of equipment you can load onto a 'Mech. You'll find factual information and suggestions for using weapons and equipment effectively, as well as suggestions on which items are most useful for the typical MechWarrior.

The first section of this chapter covers every weapon in detail. The second section covers equipment. The third section covers weapons that didn't appear in the original *MechWarrior III,* but *do* appear in *Pirate's Moon*. (We've listed these new weapons separately so that they can be easily located.) The final section contains tables summarizing vital information on every weapon in the game.

TIP

Read carefully, and compare the statements in this chapter with your own personal assessment of weapons and equipment. Your unique style of piloting a 'Mech may cause you to value particular weapons and equipment more than we do, or dislike weapons and equipment that this chapter recommends.

WEAPONS

The weapons you can mount on a 'Mech fall into three broad categories: energy, ballistic, and missile. Each category has its own distinct characteristics. Energy weapons are light and portable, and there's no limit to how many times they can be fired, but they generate large amounts of heat. Ballistic weapons have limited ammunition and can be tricky to aim, but they generate minimal heat and deal excellent damage. Missile weapons also have limited ammunition, and the missiles can be shot down by 'Mechs equipped with an AMS (Anti-Missile System). However, missiles generate only moderate heat, they offer a good tonnage-to-damage ratio, and they home in on their target for greater accuracy.

ENERGY WEAPONS

Energy weapons are the weapons of choice for small- to medium-sized 'Mechs because of their relative lightness. They do generate large amounts of heat, but a MechWarrior that understands the limits of his 'Mech can keep this heat in check while reaping benefits from the many energy weapons packed on his BattleMech.

Energy weapons are also great for larger 'Mechs, especially when used in multiples. Because larger 'Mechs can pack on several Heat Sinks as well, it's possible for them to group-fire large clusters of energy weapons in rapid succession without suffering from excessive heat buildup.

Heat is the only significant downside of energy weapons—and although it's indeed significant, you'll enjoy the fact that energy weapons require no ammunition. This not only means you don't have to worry about running out, but you also don't have to worry about ammo explosions if enemy fire penetrates your 'Mech's armor.

SMALL LASER

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 120 meters

The Small Laser is an extremely light weapon with minimal range. It generates minimal heat. This combination of low heat and low tonnage makes the Small Laser a suitable weapon for small 'Mechs.

Larger 'Mechs can handle bigger and more potent weapons that aren't as range-restricted as the Small Laser. Occasionally you might have a free half-ton on a larger 'Mech that seems to be the perfect place for a Small Laser, but you should only add it if you have other short-range weapons that it can be suitably grouped with. After all, it'd be silly for your 80-ton BattleMech, armed with deadly ER PPCs and devastating Autocannons, to ignore those weapons and fire a single Small Laser at the enemy; that's just a waste of time.

Small 'Mechs can benefit from Small Lasers—but again, you should only use them if you plan on fighting at close range. Small 'Mechs' main advantage is their speed and elusiveness, and fighting at very close range restricts that elusiveness; even enemies with poor aim can likely hit you at close range. If you plan to face other small 'Mechs and vehicles, however, a cluster of Small Lasers can give you excellent short-range punch.

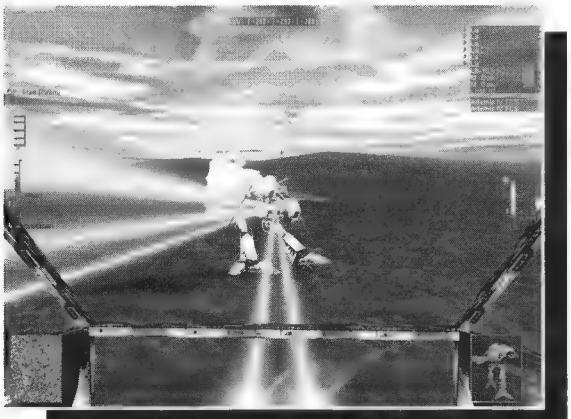


Figure 2-1. Large groups of Medium Lasers can deal excellent damage.

MEDIUM LASER

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 360 meters

The Medium Laser is the benchmark weapon by which all others are judged. It's one of the most efficient Inner Sphere weapons in existence; very few weapons weighing only one ton and taking up only one critical space can deal an equivalent amount of damage.

It's the compact nature of the Medium Laser that makes it most appealing, especially for smaller 'Mech designs. Because of the weapon's minimal tonnage, even a very small 'Mech can load several Medium Lasers onboard, and thus make itself a legitimate threat on the battlefield. Of course, very small 'Mechs tend not to have room for many heat sinks, which creates a problem when firing multiple lasers—but nevertheless, Medium Lasers rank among the very best weapons for providing both small and large 'Mechs with extra punch.

The Medium Laser also benefits from speed. Laser shots reach their target instantaneously, whereas projectiles such as Autocannon bursts take much longer to hit the mark. As a consequence, lasers are easier to aim than Autocannons and their ilk, especially over long distances; it's just a matter of aiming at the spot you want to hit. A 'Mech firing Autocannons, on the other hand, must lead the target.

The only major drawback of the Medium Laser, aside from its relatively mediocre effective range, is that it generates a good deal of heat. This heat is nothing when compared to the heat generated by, say, a Large ER Laser or an ER PPC, but it's considerably more than the heat generated by projectile weapons like the Gauss Rifle. The Medium Laser is an excellent addition to most 'Mechs. It can be used in multiples as the main weapon system on small- to medium-sized 'Mechs that can't handle the weight of projectile weapons—but it's also useful on larger 'Mechs, especially when clustered in groups of six or more. It's also a good "filler" weapon, suitable for rounding out the payload of a 'Mech with a ton to spare.

LARGE LASER

Heat per Shot: 8
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 600 meters

The Large Laser has almost twice the effective range as the Medium Laser, and it deals more damage. However, the cost is steep: The Large Laser generates almost three times the heat as the Medium Laser, and weighs five times as much.

You'll always pay more in tonnage and/or heat to get a weapon with extra range, so the Large Laser can't be faulted for its excesses. Still, Large Lasers can't be piled onto small- or medium-sized 'Mechs indiscriminately, in the same way that Medium Lasers can. For medium-sized 'Mechs, you might want to use multiple smaller weapons as the main weapon system, then pack on a single Large Laser for extra punch, especially at medium-long range.

ER SMALL LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 240 meters

The Clan's ER Small Laser makes a lot of sense for small- to mid-sized 'Mechs. It weighs less than a standard Medium Laser and generates less heat, yet it deals similar damage. On the downside, it also has a shorter effective range.

The Clan ER Small Laser won't put the Medium Laser out of business, as its range is short enough to occasionally be a problem. But you can pack these lasers on in mass quantities for an extremely potent close-range punch. Just watch the heat, as you can load on so many of these that you might find yourself in trouble despite the low heat value of individual weapons.

ER MEDIUM LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 5
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 600 meters

The Clan's ER Medium Laser deals comparable damage to the "standard" (Inner Sphere) Medium Laser, but it features the same extended range of a Large Laser. It doesn't weigh any more than the standard Medium Laser, so you can pack on these weapons at will.

TIP

If you replace your Medium Lasers with the Clan's ER Medium Lasers, monitor yourself in combat to see if you're using their extra range effectively. If not, you might as well go back to the regular Medium Lasers, which generate less heat (so you can pack more of them on without as many heat worries).

The main downside of this weapon is its heat. It generates almost twice as much heat as a regular Medium Laser, despite dealing approximately the same amount of damage.

The ER Medium Laser is a great weapon to use as a mainstay if you have access to lots of heat sinks—preferably, double heat sinks. With enough heat sinks in place, you can enjoy a potent array of lasers and yet fight at fairly long range.

ER LARGE LASER

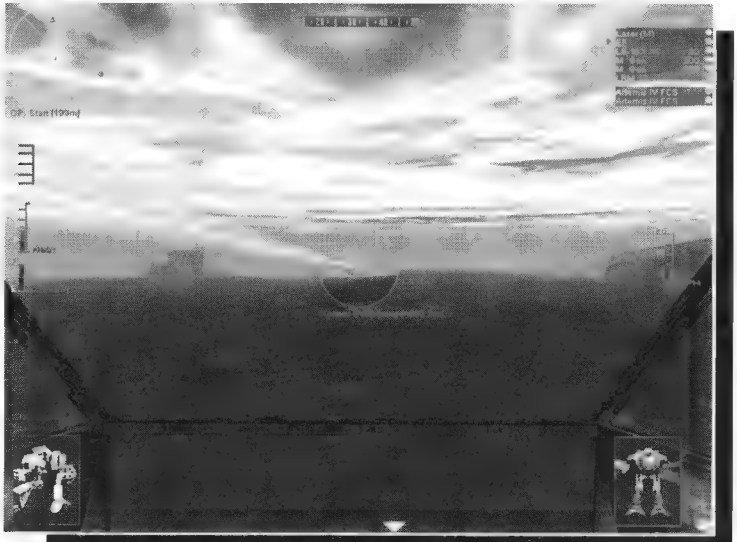


Figure 2-2. The ER Large Laser can fire at targets so far away that you can hardly see to aim at them.

Heat per Shot: 12
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 1,000 meters

The ER Large Laser is an excellent weapon for long-range sniping. It possesses the longest range of any available weapon and, because lasers fire instantaneously, you'll have a good chance of actually hitting your target at those extended ranges.

This range, however, comes at a price of high heat. The ER Large Laser weighs no more than a regular Large Laser, but it generates 150 percent of the heat. This means you can't just lump in an ER Large Laser with your main laser group and use it indiscriminately; in most 'Mechs, this will lead to critical heat levels in no time.

Take the ER Large Laser in missions where you think you'll need a legitimate long-range threat, either to take out stationary turrets or to harass the enemy. If you don't plan on making use of its great range, however, a regular Large Laser is a better choice.

ER LARGE LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 12
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 4
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 1,000 meters

The Clan's variant of the ER Large Laser is identical to its standard (Inner Sphere) variant, save that it weighs a ton less. If you have access to this weapon, therefore, you should always use it instead of the standard ER Large Laser.

However, tonnage isn't the ER Large Laser's main problem—heat is. And this version doesn't rectify the massive amounts of heat the weapon generates. You still might want to hold off, therefore, unless your 'Mech will benefit from extremely long-range weapons and has enough heat sinks to cope with the heat.

TIP

An ER Large Laser could be a good sniping weapon for a light 'Mech geared entirely toward long-range combat. This 'Mech would have enough speed to escape heavier foes and maintain extremely long range during combat, and the ER Large Laser would allow it to snipe at enemies at ranges where few of their weapons could respond.

This 'Mech design would require a lot of discipline and aiming skill on the part of its pilot, and would require a wide-open battlefield to take full advantage of its weapons' range.

SMALL PULSE LASER

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 240 meters

The Small Pulse Lasers, and pulse lasers in general, are good alternatives to regular lasers. Holding down the fire button results in a rapid-fire burst of laser blasts, allowing you to deal extra damage and relieving the pressure to hit with your first shot. Pulse lasers also let you deal just as much damage as you need to. If you destroy a target near the beginning of a firing sequence, just let up on the trigger and the weapon will recharge more quickly than if you had fired it until it was dry.

The Small Pulse Laser is a good alternative to other small lasers, featuring good damage and range for its class. However, bear in mind that small lasers of all descriptions suffer from lack of range and punch. You shouldn't expect Small Pulse Lasers to be a mainstay of your 'Mech's arsenal.

SMALL PULSE LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 240 meters

The Clan variant of the Small Pulse Laser deals slightly more damage than the standard Inner Sphere variant but is otherwise much the same. If it's available, you should always use the Clan Small Pulse Laser instead of the standard model.

MEDIUM PULSE LASER

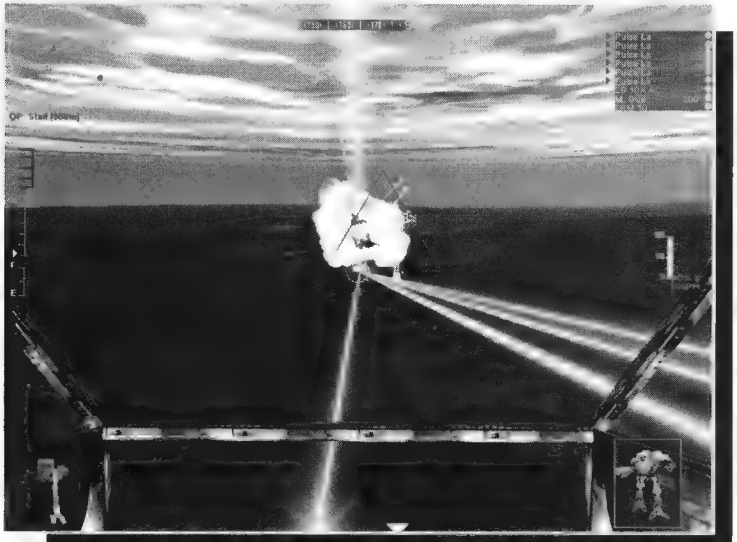


Figure 2-3. Medium Pulse Lasers fire rapidly if you hold down the trigger, generating large amounts of damage in a short period of time.

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 480 meters

The Medium Pulse Laser is an excellent weapon to build a 'Mech around. It weighs twice as much as a regular Medium Laser, making it less suitable for the very

smallest 'Mechs; however, for only a bit more heat cost than a Medium Laser it can fire multiple shots, or pulses. Some MechWarriors might prefer to deal all their damage in one discrete burst, but Pulse Lasers' ability to fire multiple times reduces the pressure to hit with the first shot—a quality that most MechWarriors will probably appreciate. The extra damage is also a definite plus.

You'll find that 'Mechs using large batteries of Medium Pulse Lasers as their main combat weapon group are extremely efficient, especially in campaign missions. The Medium Pulse Laser's combination of decent range, good damage, and unlimited shots makes it an ideal mainstay weapon.

MEDIUM PULSE LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 480 meters

The Clan's variant of the Medium Pulse Laser is much the same as the Inner Sphere version, but it deals slightly more damage. Use it whenever possible, but realize that it's very similar to the Inner Sphere variant.

LARGE PULSE LASER

Heat per Shot: 10
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 800 meters

The Large Pulse Laser falls squarely in between the Large Laser and Large ER Laser in terms of heat generation. It runs hotter than a Large Laser but not as hot as the Large ER Laser. It does, however, weigh more than both of them.

The Large Pulse Laser is an excellent weapon with excellent range. It's not suitable for 'Mechs without multiple heat sinks, as it does generate a good deal of heat, but it's otherwise very solid.

Ultimately, your preference for regular lasers or Pulse Lasers will dictate whether to load this weapon on board. If you like the multiple-shot style of Pulse Lasers, this weapon will give your Pulse Laser weapons group added range and punch. If you prefer single-shot weapons, a regular Large Laser might serve you better.

LARGE PULSE LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 10
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 6
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 800 meters

The Clan variant of the Large Pulse Laser is fundamentally identical to the standard variant, save that it weighs a ton less. This makes it more attractive than the standard variant, which is the heaviest laser you can load onto a 'Mech. Use it instead of the standard Large Pulse Laser whenever possible.

ER PPC

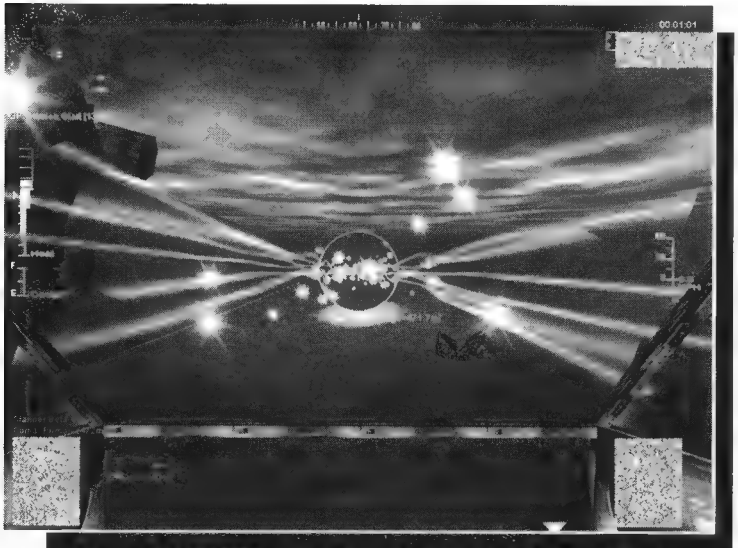


Figure 2-4. ER PPCs are extremely potent, and effective at extreme range.

Heat per Shot: 15
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: —
Range: 920 meters

The ER PPC is a tricky beast to manage, but its great upside makes it intriguing to most MechWarriors. It deals extreme damage at extreme range, much like a Gauss Rifle, but its

weight is less than half that of a Gauss Rifle and it takes up less than half as much space. It also can fire an unlimited number of times, unlike the ammo-intensive Gauss Rifle.

With all these upsides, one would expect a serious downside, and indeed, that's the case: The ER PPC generates more heat than any other weapon in existence. The heat is such that firing a single ER PPC twice in a row, quickly, will overheat and shut down a 'Mech without extra heat sinks. The weapon runs very hot.

Aiming the ER PPC is comparable to aiming a Gauss Rifle. The projectile takes a short while to reach the target, so it's necessary to lead moving foes. Aiming the ER PPC is a fine art, so you shouldn't expect to hit the mark on your first few tries—especially if you're taking advantage of the ER PPC's excellent range and sniping at enemies 800 or more meters away.

The ER PPC can be used on a light hit-and-run style 'Mech, though on such a 'Mech it would be a solo weapon—its heat would preclude use of other weapons simultaneously. Also, the MechWarrior would need to exercise discretion instead of firing indiscriminately, or else the 'Mech would constantly overheat.

Mainly, though, you should load ER PPCs onto large 'Mechs, especially those with double heat sinks. 'Mechs with at least five or six double heat sinks (in addition to the base 10 heat sinks that come standard with every 'Mech) will be able to manage the heat of the ER PPC, and perhaps even use twin ER PPCs for a truly devastating long-range attack.

Never try to add an ER PPC to a 'Mech without multiple heat sinks. It's a surefire recipe for disaster.

ER PPC (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 15
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 6
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 920 meters

The Clan's take on the ER PPC is very similar to the Inner Sphere's, save that it weighs a ton less and takes up one less critical space. You should therefore use the Clan model instead of the Inner Sphere model whenever possible. Bear in mind, though, that heat, not tonnage, is the main problem with the ER PPC—and the Clan model doesn't improve the weapon in that area.

TIP

The ER PPC is truly a two-faced weapon: It's excellent on a 'Mech with multiple double heat sinks, and a nightmare on a 'Mech with inadequate heat sinks. Use it under the right circumstances, and you'll be pleased.

FLAMER

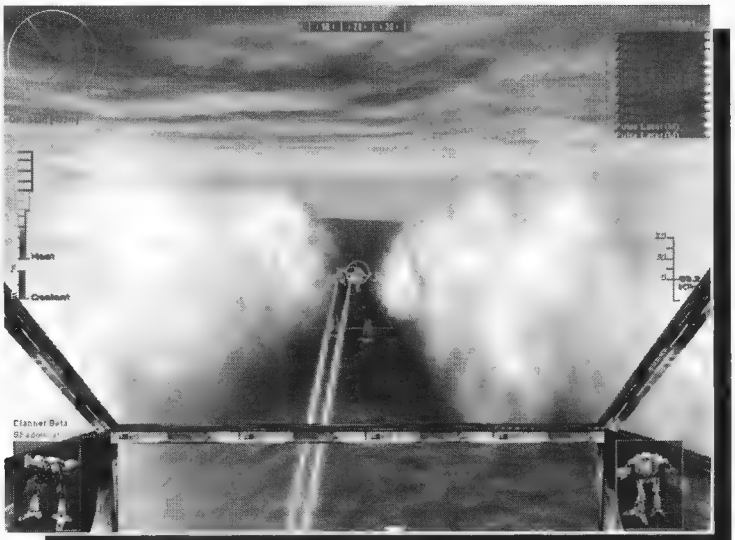


Figure 2-5. Flamers, when used in large groups, can be extremely potent.

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: Low (Heat)
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 120 meters

The Flamer is an intriguing and potentially devastating weapon. It's tough to use in small quantities because it has limited range, it generates lots of heat for its size, and it's hard to group with dissimilar weapons.

The Flamer shoots gouts of flame that travel rather slowly, so you'll have to practice aiming. A Targeting Computer can help, as can getting so close to the target that you simply can't miss. Also, because you can aim for the center of the enemy instead of individual limbs, you have more margin for error.

TIP

Flamers are a better idea in multiplayer games than in single-player.

One reason is that you often need weapons with decent range in the single-player campaign; you must achieve certain objectives, and in the course of achieving them you must sometimes cross terrain suited to long-range weapons.

Another is that you're unlikely to salvage enough Flamers to create a potent Flamer group, at least until quite late in the campaign. In multiplayer games, you can use as many Flamers as you want.

Finally, you want to *salvage* your enemies' 'Mechs in the single-player campaign. Destroying 'Mechs by overheating them, thus causing their engines to explode, makes it unlikely that there'll be anything left to salvage.

Flamers work not by damaging the target, but by heating it up. This makes it an all-or-nothing proposition. You have to heat up the enemy 'Mech enough to make it shut down or explode (due to excessive heat) to realize a tangible benefit from Flamers. This is why it's a bad idea to use only one or two Flamers; it's unlikely that you'll heat up the target enough to attain these results if you do. However, it's possible to either create a 'Mech based entirely around a large group of Flamers, or a 'Mech that uses a large group of Flamers as its main close-range attack. This 'Mech would have the potential to be devastating at close range. It would need lots of double heat sinks, though, to avoid overheating *itself* as it rapid-fired its large group of Flamers.

Just to give an example: A 'Mech with 10 double heat sinks and a group of 10 Flamers could approach a small 'Mech (say, an Owens) and destroy it with two quick group-fired Flamer shots. The heat would simply be too much for the Owens to bear.

To summarize, Flamers can be devastating, but you need to use lots of them simultaneously, and you need a 'Mech that has lots of heat sinks.

FLAMER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: Low (Heat)
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 120 meters

The Clan Flamer is identical to the standard Flamer, save that it weighs half as much. Use it instead of the standard Flamer whenever possible.

BALLISTIC WEAPONS

Ballistic weapons have a number of obvious limitations. They require ammo, which tends to run out (and can even explode if the area it's stored in is shot). They weigh more than energy weapons that do comparable damage, especially when the weight of ammo is factored in. And the vast majority of them fire projectiles that, unlike the instantaneous bursts of laser beams, take a short while to reach the target. This means it's harder to hit an enemy with them than with lasers, because the shooter has to lead the target.

With this long list of downsides, you may wonder what the point of these weapons is. The main assets of ballistic weapons are the lack of heat generated by their shots, and the possibility of massive damage when you use heavy ballistic weapons like the Gauss Rifle and larger Autocannons. Particularly in multiplayer games, the massive damage dealt by large ballistic weapons can be devastating.

GAUSS RIFLE

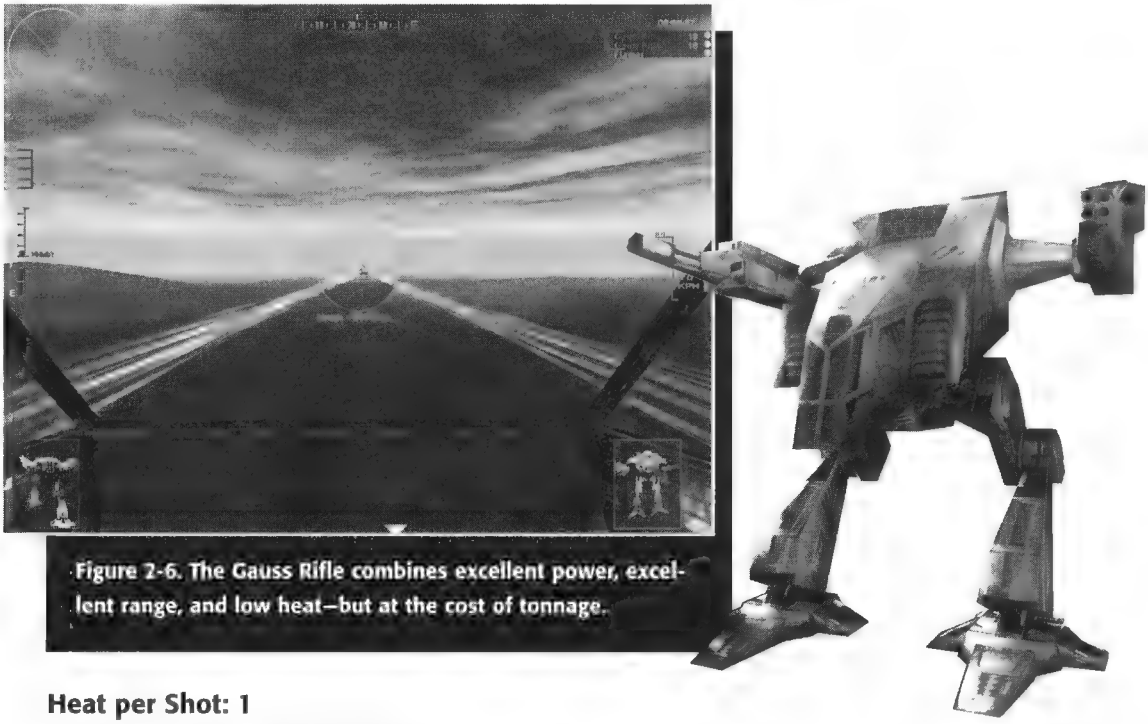


Figure 2-6. The Gauss Rifle combines excellent power, excellent range, and low heat—but at the cost of tonnage.

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 15
Critical Spaces: 7
Ammo: 8
Range: 880 meters

The Gauss Rifle is a highly specialized weapon, suitable only for MechWarriors with a penchant for long-range gunnery and 'Mechs with tonnage to spare. Anyone without both need not apply.

The Gauss Rifle deals excellent damage at very long range, but there are other weapons (or clusters of smaller weapons) that will deal comparable damage at less range for much less tonnage. So if you plan to load a Gauss Rifle, be sure that you'll really use that range.

Similarly, you need a big 'Mech to effectively use a Gauss Rifle. At 15 tons it's the heaviest weapon you can load on a 'Mech, and you'll need to spend extra tonnage on ammo because you only get 8 shots per ton.

Finally, the Gauss Rifle requires good aim, because its projectile won't hit the mark instantaneously.

The Gauss Rifle *does* have a place if you're a good shot and you're piloting a big 'Mech with a big need for long-range power. It's best in 'Mechs that have absolutely no extra heat sinks, because it only generates a single heat unit per shot. For most 'Mechs, however, the Gauss Rifle's massive tonnage simply makes it too much to carry. Use this weapon under the circumstances described above and you'll have success; use it in other situations, and you're asking for trouble.

GAUSS RIFLE (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 6
Ammo: 8
Range: 880 meters

The Clan's Gauss Rifle is almost identical to the Inner Sphere model, save for a fairly drastic reduction in weight and size. Weighing in a full three tons lighter than the standard Gauss Rifle, the Clan's Gauss Rifle is truly the superior weapon.

This reduction in weight doesn't alter the fact that the Gauss Rifle is still fairly specialized, and should only be loaded on large 'Mechs with relatively few heat sinks. But it does make the Gauss Rifle a much sweeter deal for those 'Mechs that fit the criteria.

AUTOCANNON 2

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 6
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 45
Range: 720 meters

Though some may swear by the virtues of small Autocannons, we admit that he's not fond of them. Consider the Autocannon 2: True, it produces minimal heat and has very good range, but at six tons it's one of the heaviest low-damage weapons in existence. Add in a ton of ammo for good measure, and you've got a seven-ton weapon that simply isn't that damaging. No matter how you slice it, those seven tons can be spent in better ways.

Compare the minimal damage done by a lone Autocannon 2 to the *seven* Clan ER Medium Lasers that could be loaded on a 'Mech for the same weight. The ER Medium Lasers deal more damage *individually* than the Autocannon 2; together, they can be group-fired for a devastating knockout punch. They'll generate a lot of heat, true, but if you pack on enough heat sinks you'll have a formidable 'Mech with almost as much range as a 'Mech packing the Autocannon 2. The Autocannon 2, on the other hand, is far from formidable. It's recommended that you avoid it.

AUTOCANNON 5

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 8
Critical Spaces: 4
Ammo: 20
Range: 600 meters

The Autocannon 5 is arguably a better deal than the Autocannon 2. It deals good damage at good range for only moderately more tonnage than an Autocannon 2—but then again, eight tons (plus more for ammo) is a massive tonnage investment for a single weapon that deals only moderate damage and is relatively difficult to aim.

Again, avoid small Autocannons. Feel free to experiment with them yourself, but we would use the tonnage to load up on energy weapons and group-fire them for massive damage.

AUTOCANNON 10

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 7
Ammo: 10
Range: 450 meters

The Autocannon 10 continues the Autocannon family's tradition of ballistic weapons that generate very little heat, and unlike the smaller Autocannons, the Autocannon 10 does pack a heavy punch. However, with an effective range of only 450 meters, this weapon sacrifices some of the range that characterizes the lighter Autocannons. The only real benefit you're getting in exchange for the weapon's large tonnage, therefore, is the low heat. A Large Laser weighs less than half as much, deals comparable damage, and has a longer effective range.

If you're piloting a 'Mech that requires weapons with low heat, the Autocannon 10 can be a decent choice. However, there's no getting around its hefty weight. It's low on our list of priorities.

AUTOCANNON 20

Heat per Shot: 7
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 14
Critical Spaces: 10
Ammo: 5
Range: 270 meters

The Autocannon 20 is an unwieldy beast that weighs almost as much as a Gauss Rifle and has very poor range. Worse, its ammo per ton—a mere five shots—is laughable.

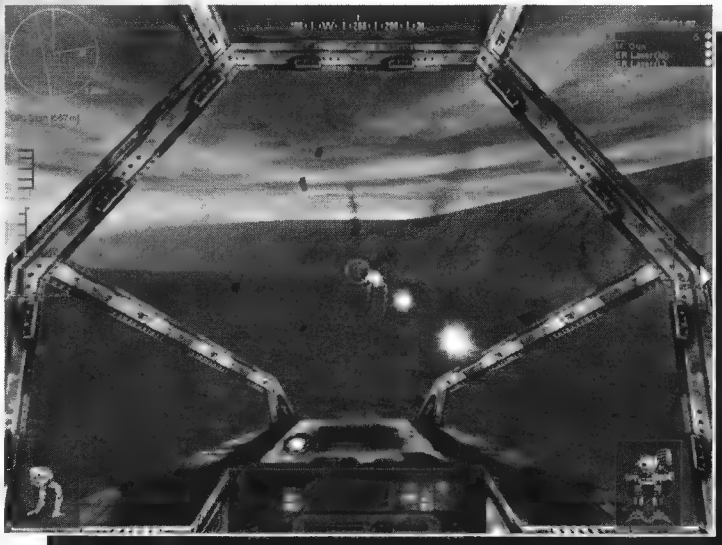


Figure 2-7. Autocannon 20s deal massive damage at short range.

Still, the Autocannon 20 has one saving grace: Pure, raw power. No other weapon can deliver the same amount of concentrated damage as an Autocannon 20, save for certain Clan versions of the Autocannon 20. Autocannon 20s are in a class by themselves. Also, though the weapon generates a good deal of heat, it's nothing when compared to the heat generated by the heaviest-hitting energy weapons.

The Autocannon 20 has a place on heavy 'Mechs that need extreme power at close range. The Autocannon 20 is arguably more useful in multiplayer games than in the single-player campaign, because you need instant stopping power when dealing with tough human enemies.

The Autocannon 20 takes up a lot of tonnage, but if you're committed to it as a main weapon system, it can pay off. Don't try to load it on small 'Mechs, as they can't handle the tonnage.

Also, be sure to add more than one ton of ammo. Even if you're planning on frequent visits to your MFBs, you'll frequently run out of ammo during combat if you take only one or two tons' worth.

Finally, if you're serious about an Autocannon 20, also consider the LB-20X Autocannon and the Ultra Autocannon 20. They deliver comparable damage to this weapon, but feature better range and take up less tonnage. They're superior, so this weapon should only be used if you want a heavy Autocannon but don't have access to the better models.

TIP

It's theoretically possible to load this weapon on a Medium 'Mech, and then use that 'Mech as a close-range bruiser in multiplayer games. Your 'Mechs usually need weapons with better range in the campaign game, however.

LB-2X AUTOCANNON (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: 45
Range: 870 meters

If you decide that you want to give small Autocannons a chance, you'll get more mileage out of the Clan's LB-2X than the Autocannon 2. It weighs a ton less than the Autocannon 2 and has a slightly better range, though it does take up more critical spaces. The net effect is to make it a more efficient weapon.

The LB-X series of Autocannons is designed to fire ammo that fragments into multiple pieces, giving it more of a chance to damage critical internal components. This makes it slightly more likely to damage a 'Mech's vital systems once armor has been peeled away from a particular area, but slightly less effective at getting rid of armor in the first place.

LB-5X AUTOCANNON (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 4
Ammo: 20
Range: 690 meters

The LB-5X weighs a ton less than the Autocannon 5 and has slightly better range as well. Take it instead of the Autocannon 5 if it's available.

LB-10X AUTOCANNON

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 11
Critical Spaces: 6
Ammo: 10
Range: 520 meters

The LB-10X carries on the LB-X tradition of dealing comparable damage to standard Autocannons of the same size, but with somewhat better range and at slightly less tonnage. This model also generates less heat and takes up fewer critical spaces than its standard counterpart, the Autocannon 10. This makes it an improvement over the Autocannon 10 in almost every conceivable way.

LB-10X AUTOCANNON (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 10
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 10
Range: 520 meters

The Clan's variant of the LB-10X Autocannon is a marked improvement over the standard LB-10X, which is itself a great improvement over a standard Autocannon 10. It weighs a ton less than the standard LB-10X and takes up one less critical space as well.

If you want to carry an Autocannon of this size, and you can choose from any model you'd like, you should either take this model or the Ultra Autocannon 10. These are the most efficient designs.

LB-20X AUTOCANNON (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 9
Ammo: 5
Range: 330 meters

The LB-20X improves on many of the powerful but inefficient Autocannon 20's shortcomings. It weighs two tons less, takes up one less critical space, and has significantly better range than an Autocannon 20. It also generates slightly less heat.

These improvements don't change the fact that Autocannons of this size are massive beasts, so don't plan on loading an LB-20X onto your Firefly anytime soon. But the extra efficiency afforded by the LB-20X goes a long way toward making heavy Autocannons practical for 'Mechs in the 60-70 ton range.

Obviously, if you have a choice between a standard Autocannon 20 and this weapon, pick this one.

ULTRA AUTOCANNON 2 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 45
Range: 810 meters

The Ultra Autocannon family seeks to concentrate damage rather than spread it out. These weapons devastate a single part of a 'Mech rather than spread out the damage as an LB-X Autocannon would. Because concentrated damage is generally a good thing in *Pirate's Moon*, Ultra Autocannons are powerful indeed.

The Clan Ultra Autocannon 2 is more efficient in terms of both tonnage and range than a standard Autocannon 2. It has more range as well. When compared with an LB-2X Autocannon, another close relative, the Ultra Autocannon 2 isn't clearly better or worse. It has slightly less range than the LB-2X but it also takes up one less critical space.

The bottom line is that if you want to use Autocannons of this size, make it this one or the LB-2X.

ULTRA AUTOCANNON 5

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 9
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 20
Range: 630 meters

The Ultra Autocannon 5 isn't a particularly efficient weapon. It has fractionally better range than the standard Autocannon 5, but at the cost of more tonnage and space. Neither weapon is particularly recommended, but of the two, the standard Autocannon 5 is probably a better bet.

ULTRA AUTOCANNON 5 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: 20
Range: 630 meters

The Clan's version of the Ultra Autocannon 5 is far superior to the standard version. It features significantly reduced tonnage and bulkiness.

If you're going to use an Autocannon of this size, this one and the LB-5X Autocannon are your best bets. This weapon has slightly less range than the LB-5X but more concentrated punch, and it takes up one less critical space.

ULTRA AUTOCANNON 10 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 10
Critical Spaces: 4
Ammo: 10
Range: 540 meters

The Ultra Autocannon 10's closest relative is the LB-10X Autocannon. The Ultra, however, is lighter, less bulky, and has fractionally better range. It also generates slightly more heat, but the overall heat production is so low that this shouldn't be an issue.

Of all Autocannons this size, we recommend this one.

ULTRA AUTOCANNON 20 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 7
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 8
Ammo: 5
Range: 360 meters

The Ultra Autocannon 20 is very comparable to an LB-20X Autocannon. The Ultra is slightly less bulky and has slightly better range, but it also generates slightly more heat.

We would usually pick this Autocannon over the LB-20X, but both are extremely powerful close-range weapons. Both are also greatly superior to the standard Autocannon 20, which should be avoided in favor of the LB-20X or the Ultra if either is available.

MACHINE GUN

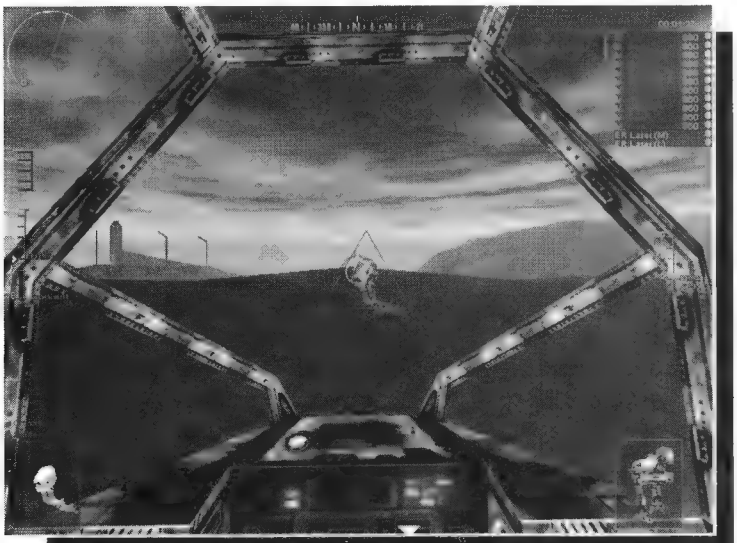


Figure 2-8. Machine Guns can be reasonably effective in large groups.

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 200
Range: 120 meters

The Machine Gun is an unusual weapon. At only a half ton, its weight is hard to beat. This low weight suggests that it might be a good "filler" weapon, suitable for filling up that last half-ton on an otherwise loaded 'Mech. However, the fact that the Machine Gun needs to be fired continuously to be effective makes it unlike most other weapons, so it's hard to group with other weapons.

The other alternative is to load a huge group of Machine Guns—at least 10—onto your 'Mech. You'd need lots of Machine Gun ammo as well, but no heat sinks, because Machine Guns generate zero heat. This 'Mech would be quite effective in close-range duels if you group-fired all those Machine Guns simultaneously. However, it would have rotten range—so you'd only want to use it in multiplayer games, where you can control the range of fights more carefully than you can in the single-player campaign.

MACHINE GUN (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.25
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 200
Range: 120 meters

The Clan's take on the Machine Gun weighs about half as much as the standard Inner Sphere version. This allows you to pack on more Machine Guns, thus making the "Machine Gun 'Mech" described above even more effective.

For most 'Mechs, however, Machine Guns—Clan or not—are too specialized to be of much use.

TIP

A Machine Gun 'Mech could be fairly effective, but it'd never be a top-flight 'Mech. Its limited range and ammo would make it too vulnerable to long-range designs. Also, it'd require you to fight at such close range that you'd be practically guaranteed of taking heavy collateral damage.

An all-Flamer 'Mech would probably beat out an all-Machine Gun 'Mech.

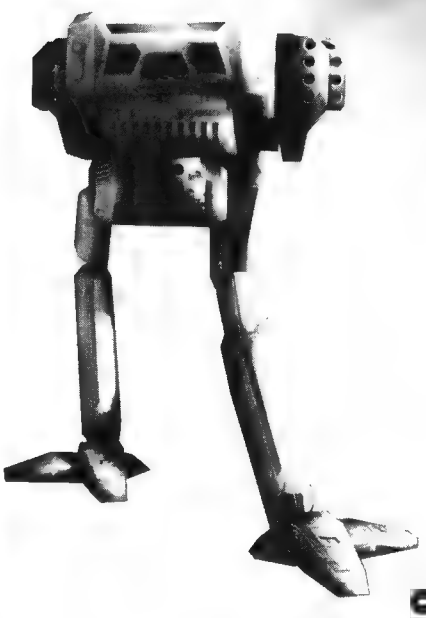
MISSILE WEAPONS

Missile weapons, like ballistic weapons, have a finite supply of ammunition. Individual missiles can be shot down with an Anti-Missile System, a fairly common form of defensive equipment.

Despite these drawbacks, missiles have several distinct advantages. They produce only moderate heat when fired, they weigh less than ballistic weapons that do comparable damage, and they home in on their target, ensuring good accuracy even at long range. Because of these advantages, missile weapons are a solid addition to any 'Mech, especially for MechWarriors with less-than-stellar aim.

LRM 5

Figure 2-9: LRMs are an effective way of damaging targets at long range.



Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 24
Range: 800 meters

Just as the Medium Laser is the benchmark energy weapon, the LRM 5 is the benchmark missile weapon. It's a small, compact missile rack that can be carried by even the smallest 'Mechs. By itself, an LRM 5 rack won't do much damage—but with repeated firings, or when paired with other LRM racks, it can damage or destroy enemies at long range.

Even if you enjoy short-range combat, you have to appreciate the value of damaging your foes from afar. Enemies that lack long-range capabilities will be powerless before your long-range assault. And those that do have missiles or long-range weapons of their own will at least have to respect your ability at that range.

Long-range weapons like the LRM 5 are particularly useful against vehicles and turrets. A swarm of APCs or Bulldogs could deal serious damage if allowed to get too close, but if you pick them off with LRMs before they enter their effective range, you'll emerge unscathed.

LRMs recycle quickly, so you can fire them quickly. They also generate fairly minimal heat, so you can fire multiple LRM 5s for quite awhile before driving your heat up to critical levels. Additionally, they home in on their targets, though extremely fast-moving foes can sometimes elude them. You can safely fire an LRM 5 at a target at medium to long range, and rest assured that—barring some tricky jump jetting, an intervening obstacle, or an Anti-Missile System—you'll achieve respectable accuracy.

Ultimately, LRMs' only downside is their limited ammunition (which isn't that bad, as you get 24 shots per ton of ammo) and the fact that they aren't as efficient in terms of damage-per-ton as certain other shorter-range weapons (like the Medium Laser). But that's the tradeoff; you always pay extra tonnage if you want a long-range weapon, and, at two tons, the LRM 5 is an excellent bargain.

LRM 5 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 24
Range: 800 meters

The Clan's LRM 5 weighs exactly half as much as the standard LRM 5, but is otherwise identical. This is a great advantage that allows you to pack on a vast number of missile launchers—so use the Clan version whenever possible.

LRM 10

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 12
Range: 800 meters

TIP

The number in an LRM's or SRM's name indicates the number of missiles fired simultaneously. An LRM 5 shoots five missiles at once, while an LRM 20 fires 20 missiles at once. Thus, the LRM 20 does four times the damage of an LRM 5. You'd need to pack on four LRM 5s to match an LRM 20's power.

The LRM 10 isn't a particularly good deal. It fires twice as many missiles as an LRM 5, yet it weighs *more* than twice as much. In terms of efficiency, you'd be better off just using two LRM 5s and group-firing them.

If there's an advantage to the LRM 10, it's that the missile grouping may be a bit tighter than that of missiles fired from two LRM 5s, so you may achieve slightly more concentrated damage with the LRM 10. Also, there's sometimes merit to cutting down on clutter in your weapons groups by having one big weapon instead of two smaller ones.

The bottom line is that we would take two LRM 5s instead, but the overall difference is small.

LRM 10 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 2.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 12
Range: 800 meters

The Clan's LRM 10 weighs half as much, and takes up half as much critical space as the standard LRM 10. This makes it a highly efficient weapon. Of course, a pair of Clan LRM 5s is a bit more efficient than a Clan LRM 10, but both weapon systems are vastly superior to Inner Sphere designs because of their low weight.

LRM 15

Heat per Shot: 5
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: 8
Range: 800 meters

The LRM 15, like the LRM 10, is less efficient in terms of tonnage than LRM 5s, equaling its damage. In other words, if you use three LRM 5s, you'll deal

TIP

If you look at LRM ammo per ton, you'll notice that you get 24 shots per ton of LRM 5 ammo, 12 shots per ton of LRM 10 ammo, 8 shots per ton of LRM 15 ammo, and 6 shots per ton of LRM 20 ammo. This might make it seem like the LRM 5, with its large number of shots per ton, seem like a good deal.

However, if you do the math, you'll see that there's really no difference in ammo. For example, let's say that you replace an LRM 20 with four LRM 5s. (Four LRM 5s deal the same damage as one LRM 20; see the tip under Clan LRM 5 for an explanation.) With one ton of ammo between these four LRM 5s, they can fire exactly six times, which is the same number of times an LRM 20 can fire with one ton of ammo. It all comes out equal in the end.

the same damage that an LRM 15 would, but you'll pay less in tonnage. This makes the LRM 15 appear to be a bad deal.

However, the weight inefficiency inherent in the LRM 15 is less than that of the weight-inefficient LRM 10. Also, the LRM 15 generates slightly less heat per shot than three group-fired LRM 5s. This counterbalances the weight inefficiency somewhat, and makes the LRM 15 an attractive alternative to multiple LRM 5s.

LRM 15 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 5
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 3.5
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 8
Range: 800 meters

As is typical of Clan LRM systems, the Clan LRM 15 weighs only half that of its Inner Sphere cousin (the LRM 15). This makes it a great weapon for 'Mechs that want serious long-range punch.

LRM 20

Figure 2-10. The LRM 20 packs a heavy long-range punch.

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 10
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 6
Range: 800 meters

The LRM 20 deals excellent damage at long range. A single LRM 20 weighs more than four LRM 5s, which deal comparable damage. However, four LRM 5s will generate significantly

more heat (when group-fired) than a single LRM 20, so the LRM 20 is the better choice when heat is a concern.

Be sure to load more than one ton of ammo when using this weapon. As discussed in a tip earlier, the LRM 20 is no less ammo-efficient than other LRM designs—but you'll need at least two or three tons of ammo if you plan to use the LRM 20 very much.

LRM 20 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 5
Critical Spaces: 4
Ammo: 6
Range: 800 meters

The Clan's LRM 20, like other Clan LRM designs, weighs half as much as its Inner Sphere counterpart. This makes it an excellent weapon for 'Mechs that need long-range punch. A 'Mech sporting twin Clan LRM 20s and stocked with a good supply of missiles is a genuine long-range nightmare.

SRM 2

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 50
Range: 360 meters

SRMs, or Short Range Missiles, are potent close-range weapons. They require a steady aim to achieve an initial lock, but once they're locked-on, you can fire at will with a high degree of accuracy. SRMs home in on their target, but they have a limited turning rate—so if you fire *way* off the mark, the missiles are likely to miss.

If you plan on packing SRMs, you're advised to use them in multiples. This allows you to make them into their own potent weapon group. Also, you might want to use SRM 4s and SRM 6s if they're available. These larger SRM packs are slightly more heat-efficient than multiple SRM 2s.

SRM 2 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 50
Range: 360 meters

The Clan's SRM 2 weighs only half a ton, making it truly portable. Obviously, if you have the chance to use the Clan version instead of the standard version, you should do it.

SRM 4

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 25
Range: 360 meters

The SRM 4 launches twice as many missiles as the SRM 2, and therefore weighs twice as much. It only generates about 150 percent as much heat as an SRM 2, though, making it more efficient than a pair of SRM 2s (which would deal comparable damage).

The SRM 4 deals good damage by itself, though you should group fire it with other SRM launchers for a truly devastating short-range punch.

Feel free to incorporate groups of SRM 4s and SRM 6s in your 'Mech designs, especially if you like weapons that are easy to aim.

TIP

Another reason to group fire multiple SRMs is to overload enemies with AMSs (Anti-Missile Systems). The AMS won't be able to shoot down all your missiles if you fire them all at once.

SRM 4 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 25
Range: 360 meters

The Clan SRM 4 carries on the Clan's tradition of missile systems that are nearly identical to their Inner Sphere counterparts, save for the fact that their weight is halved. The Clan's SRM 4 fits this description perfectly, offering a potent missile launcher at half the tonnage of the standard SRM 4. This system is highly recommended.

SRM 6

Figure 2-11. SRMs are potent short-range weapons. They generate less heat than lasers.

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 3
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 15
Range: 360 meters

The SRM 6 deals excellent damage at close range, offering easy-to-aim power at a reasonable tonnage cost. Use multiples for a truly devastating punch.

SRM 6 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 1.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 15
Range: 360 meters

As usual, this Clan system weighs only half as much as its standard counterpart, the SRM 6. Use it instead of the standard version whenever it's available.

STREAK SRM 2

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 1.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 50
Range: 480 meters

Streak SRMs are identical to common SRMs save for their increased homing ability. You'll have to wait for a missile lock before firing Streak SRMs, just as you would with regular SRMs, but the Streak SRMs' increased homing translates into greater accuracy when the lock is achieved.

The question often arises: Should you load regular SRMs or Streak SRMs onto your 'Mechs? Usually, Streak SRMs are better if you can get your hands on them. Their increased accuracy is handy, and they have better range to boot. Their only downside is their relatively high heat generation.

As for the Streak SRM 2, specifically, it's the least efficient of the Streak SRMs because it's not Clan-made. However, it still can be a useful weapon if other Streak models aren't available.

TIP

Comparing Streak SRMs to Clan SRMs is tricky. The Streak SRMs enjoy better accuracy and range, but the Clan's regular (non-Streak) SRMs are half the weight. If both are available, it usually comes down to a question of which is most important on a given 'Mech design: weight efficiency, or range and accuracy.

STREAK SRM 2 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 50
Range: 480 meters

The Clan's Streak SRM 2 is superior in distance to the standard SRM 2, plus, as a Streak weapon it enjoys better missile tracking. It isn't as weight-efficient as a Clan SRM 2, though, so you'll have to decide whether to go with the lighter Clan SRM 2 or the heavier but more accurate Clan Streak SRM 2.

STREAK SRM 4 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 3
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 25
Range: 480 meters

The Clan Streak SRM 4 fires twice the missiles of the Clan Streak SRM 2, therefore doing double the damage. It also weighs twice as much, but it *doesn't* generate twice as much heat. This makes it more efficient than a pair of Streak SRM 2s, so if you're planning on loading on lots of missiles anyway, use Streak SRM 4s instead of Streak SRM 2s.

This heat efficiency is unusually good—the best of the Streak SRMs, in fact. If you can get away with using only Clan Streak SRM 4 systems, your 'Mech will stay cooler than it would if you'd loaded multiple Clan Streak SRM 2s or 6s.

STREAK SRM 6 (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 3
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 15
Range: 480 meters

The Clan Streak SRM 6 doesn't share the singular heat efficiency of the Clan Streak SRM 4, but it's not *inefficient*; it's no less efficient than the Clan Streak SRM 2 and is an excellent weapon system if the Clan Streak SRM 4 isn't available.

NARC

Figure 2-12. The NARC beacon must be fired, and must attach itself to the target, before missile accuracy is enhanced.

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: —
Tonnage: 3
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 6
Range: 1,000 meters

Not truly a weapon, the NARC missile beacon is nonetheless fired like one. Its statistics are listed here, but look in the following section on Equipment for more information on its capabilities.

NARC (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: —
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 6
Range: 1,000 meters

The Clan's variant of the NARC is lighter and less bulky, but otherwise very similar.

EQUIPMENT

The following pages explain every piece of equipment that can be loaded onto a BattleMech. Read on for both factual information and suggestions on which equipment to use.

COMMON EQUIPMENT

The following pieces of equipment are either very commonly used, or *should* be commonly used. Heat sinks, CASE, and jump jets fall into the former category, as they're all relatively common. Anti-Missile Systems and the Targeting Computer are less common, but are highly recommended.

HEAT SINKS

Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1 (Standard and Clan singles), 2 (Clan doubles), or 3 (Standard doubles)

Heat sinks come in two distinct varieties, single and double. Both the Inner Sphere and the Clan make both varieties, so there are a total of four types to choose from (standard single, Clan single, standard double, and Clan double).
Heat sinks allow 'Mechs to dissipate heat more rapidly than they otherwise would. They don't prevent heat levels from spiking up in the first place, but they help you to avoid an automatic shutdown.

Every 'Mech has 10 heat sinks built into its engine, so you'll never see a 'Mech with less than 10 heat sinks. This baseline number of heat sinks is adequate for very small 'Mechs that won't be firing many weapons simultaneously, and for 'Mechs that specialize in low-heat ballistic and missile weapons. If energy weapons or lasers are going to be a major part of your 'Mech, however, you'd better add lots of extra heat sinks.

Double heat sinks take up extra critical spaces—but they're more than worth it. Use them whenever you can.

Heavy 'Mechs featuring energy-intensive weapons should load up on at least 10 extra heat sinks—doubles, if possible. You'll have to experiment, however, to

TIP

There's little weight and space difference between Clan and standard (Inner Sphere) heat sinks, but you can't load both on a 'Mech at once. If your 'Mech has Clan double heat sinks, for example, you can't add standard double heat sinks. Nor can you add either Clan or standard single heat sinks.

see how many heat sinks your favorite weapon configuration requires. Ideally, you should be able to fire your primary weapon group nonstop several times without worrying about shutting down.

JUMP JETS

Figure 2-13. Jump jets can take your 'Mech up to elevated locations, or can help you dodge enemy fire.

Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1

Jump jets add maneuverability to your 'Mech. The more jets you add, the more maneuverability you'll have. Experiment with various numbers of jets on different-sized 'Mechs to get a sense of their power.

The value of jets depends on the terrain. Rough, multi-level terrain can either require jump jets, or at least make them extremely useful. Smooth, level terrain limits the value of the jets.

The jump jet setting in the game's Options menu also affects jump jets' value. If "Relaxed Jump Jets" is selected, you have more options; if it isn't, you're more or less restricted to jumping vertically in the direction you're currently moving.

Jump jets have fuel that quickly runs out when they're in use. When the fuel is gone, the jets stop working. This isn't fuel in the traditional sense, though—it doesn't run out permanently. It just needs time to recharge. It's recommended that you wait until the fuel is fully recharged before initiating a jump, or you won't get very far.

You'll encounter both Clan and standard (Inner Sphere) varieties of jump jets. They're functionally identical, but you can't mix and match.

ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM (AMS)

Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1

The Anti-Missile System is a small machine gun that automatically targets and shoots down incoming missiles. You can enable and disable it with the [A] key, but usually you just should leave it enabled.

An AMS can only handle so many missiles at once. It may, for example, gun down four of the six SRM 6 missiles that are headed toward it but miss the last two. The AMS is not foolproof, but by and large it does an excellent job of destroying missiles.

Because many enemies use missiles, and because any item that'll help save your skin (or at least your 'Mech's skin) is worthwhile, it's recommended that you load at least two AMS on all your 'Mechs. Three is probably optimal. With three functional AMS (only weighing in at 0.5 tons apiece) you can assure yourself of excellent protection from even huge volleys of missiles.

Take an AMS or three, and you'll usually be glad you did.

CASE

Tonnage: 0 (Clan), 0.5 (Standard)
Critical Spaces: 0 (Clan), 1 (Standard)

CASE, or Cellular Ammunition Storage Equipment, contains ammunition explosions. If you don't have CASE and your 'Mech's armor is breached, the ammunition for one of your weapons can detonate and take your whole 'Mech down with it. That's no fun. CASE restricts the ammo explosion so that it doesn't escape the area where the ammo was stored.

The Inner Sphere's CASE takes up weight and critical spaces, but the Clan's version of CASE is assumed to be built right into their 'Mechs, and hence it takes up no room at all.

If you only have the standard (Inner Sphere) version of CASE, then try to pack all your ammo into a specific body part and put CASE there to protect it. This helps keep you from adding more CASE than necessary. If you have access to the Clan version of CASE, you don't need to worry—just put it everywhere there's ammo.

Regardless of what CASE you use, however, you *should* use it—unless your 'Mech only has energy weapons, which require no ammunition.

TARGETING COMPUTER

Figure 2-14. The small circle near the target is generated by the Targeting Computer.

Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1

The Targeting Computer draws a small circle on your HUD, showing you exactly where to aim your weapon to hit a targeted enemy. You can use the numeric keypad to target individual body parts, or ignore the keypad and simply target the 'Mech in general.

The Targeting Computer can be an incredibly useful addition to your 'Mech, or simply a waste of a ton, depending on how good your aim is and what sort of weapons you're packing.

If your 'Mech uses only lasers, the Targeting Computer will be more or less redundant. Lasers fire instantaneously, and they strike the exact point you aim at. Sure, the Targeting Computer can draw a little circle over the enemy, but you already know where to aim.

A Targeting Computer will help you if your 'Mech uses missile weapons. Usually, missiles can't be aimed at a particular body location—but if you use the Targeting Computer and the numeric keypad, you can aim them more precisely. This makes your missiles much more effective, allowing you to target the same body location that you're aiming your other weapons at.

Also, the Targeting Computer is extremely useful when you're using Autocannons or Gauss Rifles, or any weapon that fires projectiles that don't hit the mark instantaneously. It's particularly good at long range, where it can be extremely difficult to, say, hit a moving target at 800 meters with a Gauss Rifle.

The Targeting Computer isn't required, but it is recommended.

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is more specialized than the equipment already discussed. This isn't to say that it's of less value; in specific situations, some of this equipment can be of great benefit. But you need to pick and choose, using only equipment that'll benefit your current 'Mech or your current situation.

ARTEMIS IV FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM

Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1

The Artemis IV Fire Control System helps you attain missile locks faster. Also, any missiles you fire while you have the Artemis onboard will track their target more aggressively than usual, and they'll follow the terrain to some degree. The end result is that you can fire your missiles slightly faster and get slightly better accuracy.

Does the Artemis IV make a vast difference? No. Is it worthwhile? Probably, if your 'Mech design features lots of missiles. A split second shaved off your missile lock time, and the occasional bonus missile hit, will add up with such a 'Mech design. A 'Mech wielding twin LRM 20s should probably take the system; a 'Mech with a pair of LRM 5s probably doesn't need it.

Both the Clan and Inner Sphere models weigh one ton and take up only one critical space—so you don't need to worry too much about wasted space.

TIP

The "terrain following" feature is interesting, and can sometimes make the difference between a hit and miss. Don't get the wrong impression, though; your missiles will still run into steep slopes. But they'll be able to swerve up over gentle slopes, which might otherwise block a few of your missiles.

BEAGLE ACTIVE PROBE (BAP)

Tonnage: 1.5
Critical Spaces: 2

The Beagle Active Probe augments your radar somewhat, especially when it comes to locating shut-down 'Mechs. This can be useful if you're playing a campaign mission you've never played before, as it shows shut-down 'Mechs well before you stumble onto them. It also can be useful in multiplayer if your foes have a penchant for shutting down and hiding.

Generally, though, you can get through campaign missions without the BAP. It's useless in hard missions that you must retry again and again, as after awhile you'll memorize enemies' locations anyway.

In multiplayer games, the BAP isn't that useful if your foes don't do much shutting down. Try to determine your enemies' style of play before taking a BAP.

C3 COMPUTER

Figure 2-15. As a result of the C3 Computer, enemies outside your radar range—but inside your lancemates' radar range—will appear on your radar.

Tonnage: 5 (Master unit), 1 (Slave unit)
Critical Spaces: 5 (Master unit), 1 (Slave unit)

The C3 Computer consists of two components. The first part, the Master unit, goes in your 'Mech. The second, Slave unit goes into a lancemate's 'Mech. Additional Slave units can be placed in other lancemates' 'Mechs, assuming that you have more than one lancemate.

The value of the C3 is that it puts your lancemates' radar information on your radar screen. If your lancemate has an enemy on his radar that you normally wouldn't have on *your* radar (because you're too far away), you can see that enemy too.

Is this useful? Sometimes, especially in multiplayer. But for the tonnage cost, it's usually not worthwhile unless you plan on coordinating precise tactics that require you to separate from your team.

ECM SUITE

Tonnage: 1 (Clan), 1.5 (Standard)
Critical Spaces: 1 (Clan), 2 (Standard)

The ECM suite interferes with enemy long-range sensors and scanning equipment. It nullifies the effects of the enemy's Beagle Active Probes, Artemis IV, NARC missile beacons, Targeting Computers, Streak Missiles, and C3 computers. It does not, however, disrupt TAG.

Should you take the ECM suite? It probably won't make that much difference in your campaign missions.

TIP

If you like to shut down your 'Mech to hide from enemy radar in multiplayer games, you'll want to pack an ECM suite onboard to nullify enemy Beagle Active Probes.

However, you might want to take it when playing multiplayer games, especially if you can determine that your enemy is using any of the equipment that the ECM suite renders useless. An enemy that packs on Gauss Rifles and Autocannons, then relies heavily on a Targeting Computer for aiming, would be severely affected by the ECM suite.

MYOMER ACCELERATION SIGNAL CIRCUITRY (MASC)

Tonnage: 2 (Standard), 3 (Clan)
Critical Spaces: 3

MASC, or Myomer Acceleration Signal Circuitry, increases a 'Mech's speed while it's engaged. It does, however, generate quite a bit of heat. The length of time you can leave MASC engaged, therefore, depends on the amount of heat sinks on your 'Mech.

While MASC is operational, your 'Mech can run at 125 percent of its normal speed. If your 'Mech normally tops out at 64.8 kph, for example, you'll be able to travel at 81 kph with MASC.

MASC can be toggled on and off with [V] so you can precisely control when you want it to function.

It can also be a good investment for both small and large 'Mechs. Small 'Mechs can use MASC to enhance their already good speed, using it to dash away from the enemy or maintain long range during combat. Larger 'Mechs can use it to cross large stretches of terrain more quickly.

Using MASC in combat can work, but you need to have a 'Mech that runs very cool—or else the heat generated by the MASC plus your weapon fire will make it hard to avoid overheating.

NARC MISSILE BEACON

Tonnage: 2 (Clan), 3 (Standard)
Critical Spaces: 1 (Clan), 2 (Standard)

The NARC missile beacon is fired like any other missile. When it hits the target, any subsequent missiles you fire at that target are more likely to hit because of the presence of the homing beacon.

We don't recommend the NARC. Even the Clan version takes up three or more tons, because you'll need at least one ton of ammo to go along with the launcher. Furthermore, missiles are fairly accurate as it is; the NARC is usually redundant.

There may be a place for a NARC on your 'Mech if it's armed to the teeth with missiles, but an Artemis IV Fire Control System weighs less and doesn't require you to fire a beacon.

TARGET ACQUISITION GEAR (TAG)

Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1

The TAG (Target Acquisition Gear) targeting laser is only used in missions where Arrow IV artillery missiles are available. Whenever a missile is inbound, you can use TAG to paint the target and increase the chances that the missile will hit it.

The decision whether to take TAG or not is simple: If your mission will feature artillery support, take it. If not, leave it at home.

NEW WEAPONS

The new weapons introduced in *Pirate's Moon* are not super-powerful replacements for old weaponry. These weapons all have assets and drawbacks, just like the old stuff—so you shouldn't automatically use these items simply because they're new. Instead, you'll have to weigh each weapon on its own merits and whether or not it fits into your plans for a particular 'Mech.

LIGHT MACHINE GUN (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.3
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 400
Range: 240 Meters

The Light Machine Gun is identical to a regular Clan Machine Gun, save for its improved ammunition supply and doubled range. The Light Machine Gun is much better than the standard Machine Gun, therefore, but the damage inflicted by all Machine Guns is light enough that you should think twice before using them.

Machine Guns are best against infantry and light armored targets, but most of your targets in *Pirate's Moon* will be 'Mechs, with a few heavily armored turrets and vehicles thrown in for good measure.

HEAVY MACHINE GUN (CLAN)

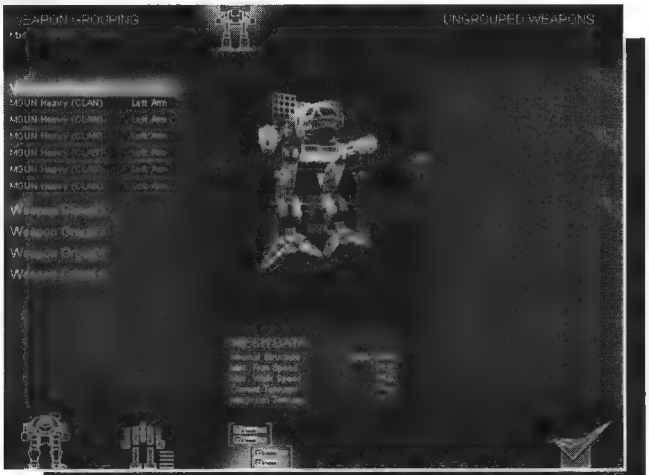


Figure 2-16. Though more powerful than a standard Machine Gun, Heavy Machine Guns still aren't potent enough to be a mainstay of your arsenal.

Heat per Shot: 0
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 100
Range: 120 meters

The Heavy Machine Gun deals twice as much damage as a standard Machine Gun, at a cost of less ammo and slightly heavier weight. Again, this is a great advancement, but Machine Guns are still hard to use as serious weapons. Theoretically, a 'Mech with a huge battery of Heavy Machine Guns could fire them simultaneously to quickly shred an opponent, but the sheer number of Heavy Machine Guns required for this task, not to mention the ammo, would eat up an alarming number of critical spaces. Factor in the Machine Guns' puny range, and you have weapons that are most appropriate for situations when you want extremely low heat and close-range punch.

LIGHT GAUSS RIFLE

Heat per Shot: 1
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 16
Range: 1,000 meters

The Light Gauss Rifle is much like the standard Gauss Rifle, save for its somewhat improved range, better ammo supply, and reduced damage.

Usually, the main reason to pack a Gauss Rifle is for potent long-range punch. Since the Light Gauss Rifle isn't a true heavy hitter, you'd pack this weapon as more of a medium-power, long-range sniping weapon.

Usually you want more power in exchange for 12 or more tons of 'Mech space, but the Light Gauss Rifle can be of use if you want a 'Mech with the best possible weapon range *and* very low heat.

MRM 10

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 3
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 24
Range: 570 meters

MRMs, or Medium Range Missiles, are an excellent new addition to your arsenal. As the name suggests, they fill the range gap between LRMs and SRMS. They can also be packed on in great numbers, making them very damaging.

In terms of damage, MRMs are a lot like LRMs. The damage of an MRM 10, for example, is roughly equivalent to the damage of an LRM 10; both weapon systems fire 10 missiles. The MRM has less range, but MRM systems are available with higher missile counts—while LRMs only come in 5, 10, 15 and 20 sizes, MRMs are available in 10, 20, 30, and 40.

The MRM 10 by itself is a fairly potent medium-range threat. Larger MRM Launchers, or multiple MRM 10s, will only add to the power.

MRM 20

Heat per Shot: 9
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: 12
Range: 570 meters

The MRM 20 is a devastating medium-range weapon, roughly equivalent to an LRM 20 but with lesser range. An MRM 20 weighs slightly more than a Clan LRM 20, but you'll save tonnage on ammunition, as you get more shots per ton of ammo.

If you must decide between loading two MRM 10s or a single MRM 20 onto your 'Mech, realize that a pair of MRM 10s will actually weigh a bit less, but will generate somewhat more heat and take much more critical space than an MRM 20. Make your selection based on what your 'Mech needs most.

MRM 30

Heat per Shot: 14
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 10
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 8
Range: 570 meters

An MRM 30 is a heavy-hitting weapon. It's highly recommended for 'Mechs that need mid-range firepower; the only reason to avoid it is if you really need the range afforded by LRMs.

An MRM 30 deals damage equivalent to three MRM 10s. The three MRM 10s would generate more heat than the MRM 30, but would take up slightly less weight and critical space. If tonnage is short, several MRM 10s are better; if heat is a concern, go with the MRM 30.

MRM 40

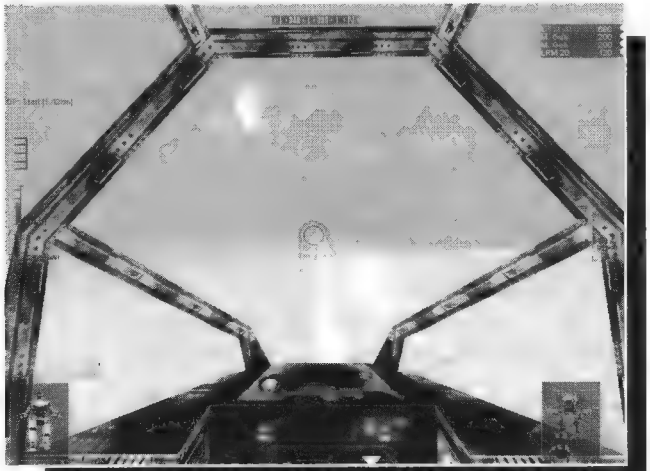


Figure 2-17. MRM 40s deal enough damage to knock down most 'Mechs, and kill some of them outright.

Heat per Shot: 18
Maximum Damage: Extreme
Tonnage: 12
Critical Spaces: 7
Ammo: 6
Range: 570 meters

The MRM 40 is a true power weapon. It unleashes the equivalent of two LRM 20 blasts simultaneously, albeit with somewhat less range than LRM 20 missiles.

If you want to load up your 'Mech with MRMs, the MRM 40 is the best available option. It deals equivalent damage to four MRM 10s, but it generates substantially less heat, takes up slightly fewer critical spaces, and weighs just the same as four MRM 10s.

With the help of the MRM 40, you'll find that the enemy goes down very quickly indeed at medium range.

THUNDERBOLT 5

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 3
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: 12
Range: 900 meters

Thunderbolt missiles have better range than LRMs. They also pack their damage into a single, concentrated package that can't be affected by AMS, instead of unleashing a barrage of missiles.

Thunderbolt 5s are best used in groups, which allows them to pack a good punch. Groups of Thunderbolt 5s generate more heat than, say, Thunderbolt 15s or 20s, but they weigh less, so you can carry more.

THUNDERBOLT 10

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: 6
Range: 900 meters

Thunderbolt 10s are less tonnage-efficient than a pair of Thunderbolt 5s, and the heat generation is the same. Thus, if all else is equal, you might consider two Thunderbolt 5s over a Thunderbolt 10. (The difference, however, is fairly minimal.)

THUNDERBOLT 15

Heat per Shot: 5
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 11
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: 4
Range: 900 meters

Thunderbolt 15s deal quite good damage at long range. Their concentrated punch can prove invaluable at the beginning of a fight.

Thunderbolts are quite heavy, however—so unless you have the space and need the range, you might want to look elsewhere.

THUNDERBOLT 20

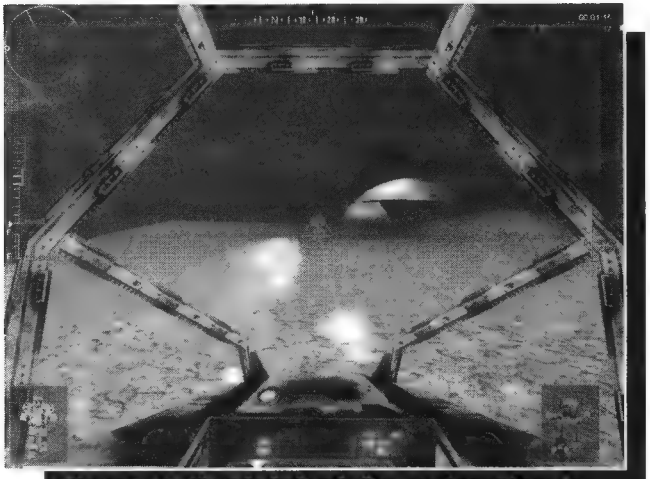


Figure 2-18. Thunderbolt missiles are impervious to AMS. They also deal all of their damage to a single spot—a valuable trait.

Heat per Shot: 6
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 15
Critical Spaces: 5
Ammo: 3
Range: 900 meters

The Thunderbolt 20 is a heavy-hitting weapon. However, it also weighs in at 15 tons—the same weight as an Ultra Autocannon 20. And the Ultra Autocannon 20 can tear apart a 'Mech in mere seconds!

The difference, of course, is the range. Thunderbolt 20s are appropriate on heavy 'Mechs with tonnage to spare—especially those that need long-range punch, but without much heat generation.

SMALL X-PULSE LASER

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 300 meters

X-Pulse Lasers are excellent weapons, if you understand their strengths and weaknesses. They have significantly better range than standard Pulse Lasers, but on the flip side, they generate more heat.

Usually you should avoid the smallest member of a family of weapons, because it's too weak to deliver much damage. The Small X-Pulse Laser is an exception to this guideline. It deals quite good damage over an adequate range, and if you can gather a big bunch of them, you can deal out a lot of punishment without using up too much tonnage, or generating too much heat.

MEDIUM X-PULSE LASER

Heat per Shot: 5
Maximum Damage: Medium
Tonnage: 2
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 600 meters

The Medium X-Pulse Laser is an excellent weapon. It's identical to the Clan and Inner Sphere Medium Pulse Lasers, but with better range, so you should *always* use these instead of the non-X-Pulse variety.

Large clusters of these lasers allow you to deal excellent damage over quite good range. They're among the most versatile weapons you can get your hands on, because they're effective at both close to mid-long rage, they don't weigh much at all, and their heat generation is at least manageable. Use these often.

LARGE X-PULSE LASER

Heat per Shot: 11
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 7
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 1,000 meters

The Large X-Pulse Laser is a good weapon, though not as versatile as the Medium X-Pulse Laser. It has one of the best ranges of any weapon, but its extremely high heat generation and substantial bulk mean that you can only use two or three of them simultaneously.

Still, two or three group-fired Large X-Pulse Lasers present a very formidable long-range attack. Pulse Lasers have the benefit of allowing you multiple tries at the target, and they can be fired as much or as little as necessary to level the target.

Experiment with these weapons. If you generally prefer Pulse Lasers to regular lasers, you may want to use these as your main long-range threat.

HEAVY SMALL LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 4
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.5
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 120 meters

Heavy Lasers have average range and generate lots of heat. Their primary upside is that they deal excellent damage, considering their miniscule tonnage.

Heavy Small Lasers are deceptive heat producers. You can use a few of them for a potent short-range attack, but if you use too many you'll find yourself in trouble. Consider them if you want a fast-firing, short-range, low-tonnage weapon.

HEAVY MEDIUM LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 7
Maximum Damage: High
Tonnage: 1
Critical Spaces: 2
Ammo: —
Range: 360 meters

Heavy Medium Lasers are excellent additions to 'Mechs with vast numbers of heat sinks, but not much room for anything else. For example, let's say that you have a Masakari with three ER PPCs and enough heat sinks to support them, but there's not much space left over. The ER PPCs are a deadly long-range threat, but you might want to add some weapons that are more appropriate at medium to close range. Enter the Heavy Medium Laser: Three or four of these constitute a very severe threat at close range, generating lots of heat—but if you have the right 'Mech for the job, this won't be a problem.

HEAVY LARGE LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 12
Maximum Damage: Very High
Tonnage: 4
Critical Spaces: 3
Ammo: —
Range: 600 meters

The Heavy Large Laser can be thought of as a shorter-range ER PPC. It deals similar damage to an ER PPC and generates identical heat, but it has less range and weighs less. If you need long-range punch, several ER PPCs will fit the bill—but if you plan to fight at shorter range, a few Heavy Large Lasers will work just as well and leave more room for much-needed heat sinks.

ER MICRO LASER (CLAN)

Heat per Shot: 2
Maximum Damage: Low
Tonnage: 0.3
Critical Spaces: 1
Ammo: —
Range: 160 meters

The Clan ER Micro Laser is purely a "filler" weapon. It has limited range and power, and is best used when you have 0.3 tons of space left in your 'Mech that you don't know what to do with. Don't try to use these in multiples; just throw in one if the situation demands it.

TABLES

The following tables summarize information about every available weapon. Use them for reference purposes.

TABLE 2-1. ENERGY WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Heat per Shot	Maximum Damage	Tonnage Spaces	Critical	Shots per Ton of Ammo	Range in Meters
Small Laser	1	Low	0.5	1	—	120 meters
Medium Laser	3	Medium	1	1	—	360 meters
Large Laser	8	High	5	2	—	600 meters
ER Small Laser (Clan)	2	Medium	0.5	1	—	240 meters
ER Medium Laser (Clan)	5	Medium	1	1	—	600 meters
ER Large Laser	12	High	5	2	—	1,000 meters
ER Large Laser (Clan)	12	High	4	1	—	1,000 meters
Small Pulse Laser	2	Low	1	1	—	240 meters
Small Pulse Laser (Clan)	2	Low	1	1	—	240 meters
Medium Pulse Laser	4	Medium	2	1	—	480 meters
Medium Pulse Laser (Clan)	4	Medium	2	1	—	480 meters
Large Pulse Laser	10	High	7	2	—	800 meters
Large Pulse Laser (Clan)	10	High	6	2	—	800 meters
ER PPC	15	High	7	3	—	920 meters
ER PPC (Clan)	15	Very High	6	2	—	920 meters
Flamer	3	Low (heat)	1	1	—	120 meters
Flamer (Clan)	3	Low (heat)	0.5	1	—	120 meters

TABLE 2-2. BALLISTIC WEAPONS

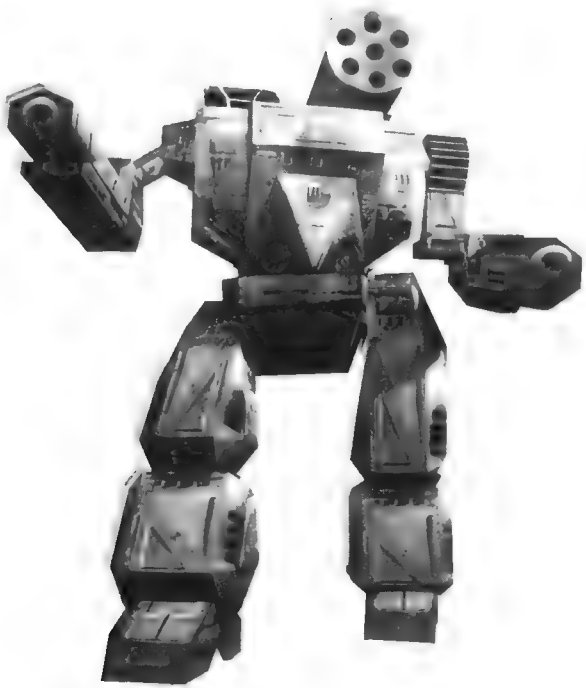
Weapon Type	Heat per Shot	Maximum Damage	Tonnage Spaces	Critical	Shots per Ton of Ammo	Range in Meters
Gauss Rifle	1	Very High	15	7	8	880 meters
Gauss Rifle (Clan)	1	Very High	12	6	8	880 meters
Autocannon 2	1	Low	6	1	45	720 meters
Autocannon 5	1	Medium	8	4	20	600 meters
Autocannon 10	3	High	12	7	10	450 meters
Autocannon 20	7	Extreme	14	10	5	270 meters
LB-2X Autocannon (Clan)	1	Low	5	3	45	870 meters
LB-5X Autocannon (Clan)	1	Medium	7	4	20	690 meters
LB-10X Autocannon	2	High	11	6	10	520 meters
LB-10X Autocannon (Clan)	2	High	10	5	10	520 meters
LB-20X Autocannon (Clan)	6	Extreme	12	9	5	330 meters
Ultra Autocannon 2 (Clan)	1	Low	5	2	45	810 meters
Ultra Autocannon 5	1	Medium	9	5	20	630 meters
Ultra Autocannon 5 (Clan)	1	Medium	7	3	20	630 meters
Ultra Autocannon 10 (Clan)	3	High	10	4	10	540 meters
Ultra Autocannon 20 (Clan)	7	Extreme	12	8	5	360 meters
Machine Gun	0	Low	0.5	1	200	120 meters
Machine Gun (Clan)	0	Low	0.25	1	200	120 meters

TABLE 2-3. MISSILE WEAPONS

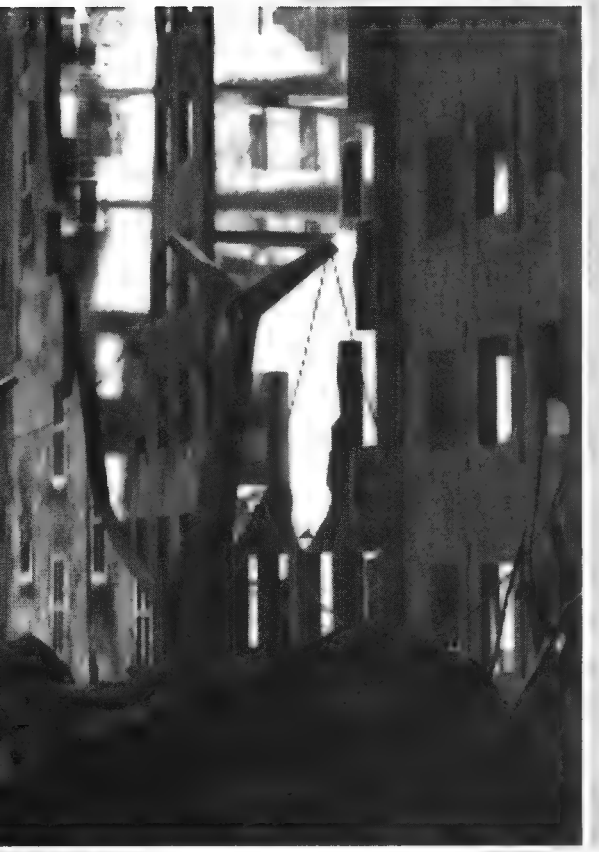
Weapon Type	Heat per Shot	Maximum Damage	Tonnage Spaces	Critical	Shots per Ton of Ammo	Range in Meters
LRM 5	2	Medium	2	1	24	800 meters
LRM 5 (Clan)	2	Medium	1	1	24	800 meters
LRM 10	4	High	5	2	12	800 meters
LRM 10 (Clan)	4	High	2.5	1	12	800 meters
LRM 15	5	Very High	7	3	8	800 meters
LRM 15 (Clan)	5	Very High	3.5	2	8	800 meters
LRM 20	6	Extreme	10	5	6	800 meters
LRM 20 (Clan)	6	Extreme	5	4	6	800 meters
SRM 2	2	Low	1	1	50	360 meters
SRM 2 (Clan)	2	Low	0.5	1	50	360 meters
SRM 4	3	High	2	1	25	360 meters
SRM 4 (Clan)	3	High	1	1	25	360 meters
SRM 6	4	Very High	3	2	15	360 meters
SRM 6 (Clan)	4	Very High	1.5	1	15	360 meters
Streak SRM 2	2	Low	1.5	1	50	480 meters
Streak SRM 2 (Clan)	2	Low	1	1	50	480 meters
Streak SRM 4 (Clan)	3	High	2	1	25	480 meters
Streak SRM 6 (Clan)	6	Very High	3	2	15	480 meters
NARC	0	–	3	2	6	1,000 meters
NARC (Clan)	0	–	2	1	6	1,000 meters

TABLE 2-4. NEW WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Heat per Shot	Maximum Damage	Tonnage Spaces	Critical	Shots per Ton of Ammo	Range in Meters
Heavy Small Laser (Clan)	4	Low	0.5	1	—	120
Heavy Medium Laser (Clan)	7	High	1	2	—	360
Heavy Large Laser (Clan)	12	Very High	4	3	—	600
ER Micro Laser (Clan)	2	Low	0.3	1	—	160
Small X-Pulse Laser	2	Medium	1	1	—	300
Medium X-Pulse Laser	5	Medium	2	1	—	600
Large X-Pulse Laser	11	High	7	2	—	1,000
Light Gauss Rifle	1	Medium	12	5	16	1,000
Light Machine Gun (Clan)	0	Low	0.3	1	400	240
Heavy Machine Gun (Clan)	0	Low	0.5	1	100	120
Thunderbolt 5	2	Low	3	1	12	900
Thunderbolt 10	4	Medium	7	2	6	900
Thunderbolt 15	5	High	11	3	4	900
Thunderbolt 20	6	Very High	15	5	3	900
MRM 10	6	High	3	2	24	570
MRM 20	9	Extreme	7	3	12	570
MRM 30	14	Extreme	10	5	8	570
MRM 40	18	Extreme	12	7	6	570



CHAPTER 3
'MECHS AND VEHICLES



THIS CHAPTER REVIEWS THE 'Mechs and vehicles that you'll encounter and pilot in your campaigns. It's important to be familiar with enemy 'Mechs and vehicles by name so that you have a good sense of what you're up against right from the start. 'Mechs can of course be modified, but just by knowing how heavy a given 'Mech design is, or what its most common design is, you can guess what sort of fire-power you're up against when you see one on the battlefield.

The statistics given for BattleMechs in this chapter are for primary variants. There are alternate versions available for most 'Mechs, and spending a little time in the 'Mech Lab allows infinite possibilities for change. Because you'll usually start out with a primary variant of a given 'Mech, however, it's useful for you to see what those primary variants' strengths and weaknesses are, and read tips on how to improve the designs.

TIP

Each 'Mech description in this chapter contains several sections of data. This information all pertains to the 'Mech's primary variant.

The first section contains general information such as the 'Mech's overall tonnage; the amount of that tonnage actually put to use; the 'Mech's walking and running speeds; and it's type of engine, armor, and internal structure.

The second section breaks down the allocation of tons inside the 'Mech, showing you how many tons go toward the engine, the armor, weapons, ammunition, and other vital systems.

The third and final section is a table that explains what weapons, ammo, and equipment are loaded on the 'Mech; how much those individual items weigh; how many critical spaces they take up; and where on the 'Mech they're placed. Note that tonnage and critical space information is for *one* of any given item; multiply those numbers by the number of the item loaded on the 'Mech for the total tonnage taken up by that item.

TIP

The 'Mech descriptions that follow contain hard data on various aspects of BattleMechs. Here's a short glossary of 'Mech terms. (Much of this information is also available from your game manual.)

- *Tonnage* refers to the overall weight of the 'Mech. All BattleMechs weigh between 20 and 100 tons. A 'Mech's overall tonnage limits how much gear can be placed on it.
- *Critical spaces* are places on a 'Mech's body where weapons and equipment can be loaded. A 'Mech without any free critical spaces can't hold any more gear.
- *Internal structure* is the 'Mech's skeleton. It comes in two varieties, standard (which is heavy but compact) and Endosteel (which is light but bulky).
- *Armor* protects the BattleMech. It comes in two varieties, standard and Ferro-fibrous. Ferro-fibrous armor is bulkier than standard but also offers more protection per ton.
- An *engine* powers the BattleMech. Engines come in Standard and XL (Extra Light). XL engines are very light but also very bulky.
- Your manual contains information on every other part of a BattleMech; refer to it for additional help.

LIGHT BATTLEMECHS

Any BattleMech weighing between 20 and 35 tons is considered light. 'Mechs of this size are sometimes referred to as Scout 'Mechs, though some of them are surprisingly capable on the battlefield as well as in pure scouting roles.

Small 'Mechs should generally be given lots of speed, as they need to be elusive if they want to stay alive. They have no choice in this matter; they can't wear enough armor to take serious abuse, so they need the ability to avoid enemy fire instead of enduring it.

FIREFLY

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 28/30 tons
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: Standard (150)
Walk/Run Speed: 54/81 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 5.5
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 1.0
Internal Structure: 3.0
Armor: 6.5
Weapons: 5.0
Ammunition: 1.0
Equipment: 1.0

TABLE 3-1. FIREFLY ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium Laser (3)	1	1	Center Torso, Left Torso, Right Torso
LRM 5	2	1	Right Torso
LRM 5 Ammo (24 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
AMS	1	0.5	Left Arm
CASE	0.5	1	Left Torso
Jump Jet (2)	0.5	1	Left Leg, Right Leg

The Firefly is the lightest 'Mech you'll encounter during your campaign. At 30 tons, it's not the lightest 'Mech ever made, but it falls squarely into the "light" or "Scout" designation. It has about as much armor as the chassis can handle, but its speed is only modest for a 'Mech of this size. Jump jets help with maneuverability.

Fireflies can't torso twist because of their unusual body shape, making them somewhat difficult to pilot.

Fireflies are quite fragile when compared with other 'Mechs, and their light weight limits their options when choosing a payload. The key to success with this sort of 'Mech is to stay within its abilities, rather than trying to make it into something it's not. In other words:

- Don't equip it with one or two heavy projectile weapons that eat up all its spare tonnage. Stick to energy weapons and missiles instead, which are much lighter and can therefore be packed on in multiples.
- Specialize in one distance. For example, make most of your weapons either close-range weapons or long-range weapons, and then try to fight at that distance. Diversifying too much is impossible because of tonnage considerations.
- Use this 'Mech in a Scout or support role. Hit and run, or else wait until heavier, allied 'Mechs initiate the battle—then sneak in and lend fire support.
- Remember that no matter how skillful you are, you probably won't take out a 90-ton 'Mech with a Firefly. Stick with tasks you can readily accomplish.

The Firefly's standard design uses highly appropriate weapons, considering the 'Mech's tonnage: three Medium Lasers, plus an LRM 5 rack to wear down the occasional long-range target. Its Anti-Missile System is also a good addition, as a 'Mech this light needs all the protection it can get.

The Firefly is, however, two tons light, using only 28 of its possible 30 tons. You can immediately add extra equipment—another AMS (Anti-Missile System) and another Medium Laser, perhaps, or a heat sink and a Medium Laser.

Furthermore, the Firefly in its default mode has lots of free critical spaces, yet its engine, armor, and internal structure are all standard. By changing the engine from standard to XL or the internal structure to Endosteel, or both, you could free up several more tons for gear.

OWENS

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 34/35
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (280)
Walk/Run Speed: 86.4/129.6 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 8.0
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 3.5
Armor: 7.0
Weapons: 6.0
Ammunition: 1.0
Equipment: 2.5

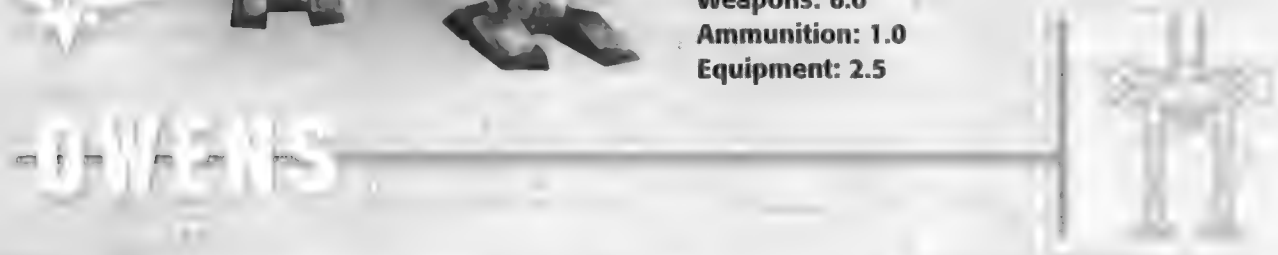


TABLE 3-2. OWENS ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Small Laser (2)	0.5	1	Center Torso (2)
Medium Laser	1	1	Head
LRM 5 (2)	2	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
LRM 5 Ammo (24 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
DAP	1.5	2	Left Torso
C3 Slave	1	1	Right Torso

The Owens is geared for speed, not power. It lacks jump jets but has the best top speed of any primary 'Mech configuration you'll encounter.

The Owens' weapons configuration is quite good but also quite basic, with a pair of LRM 5s for long-range combat and a few lasers for shorter-range combat.

Like most other small 'Mech designs, the Owens can't torso twist. This can be a minor nuisance or a real inconvenience, depending on how much you torso twist in a fight.

TIP

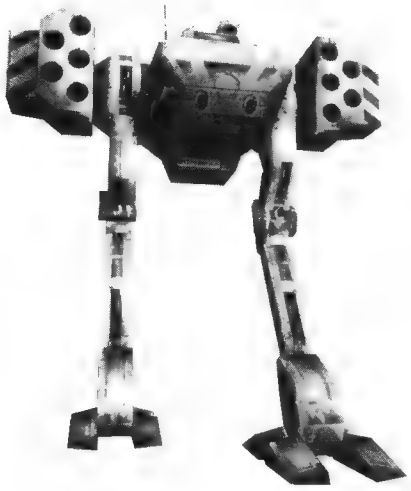
We have a tough time with 'Mechs that can't torso twist. These 'Mechs have to more or less face the enemy while firing, which makes it hard to move laterally while attacking. And without lateral movement, you're easier to hit.

You should "unlock" your targeting reticule when piloting these 'Mechs, so you can aim at any spot in your forward field of view.

While you shouldn't necessarily *avoid* 'Mechs that can't torso twist, you should realize that it'll take time to learn to use them.

This primary design can easily be altered for extra durability and firepower, assuming that you don't want the electronic gear that comes pre-loaded on it. Rip out the BAP and the C3 Slave unit for extra tonnage, switch the internal structure to Endosteel, and change the armor to Ferro-fibrous. This reduces critical spaces, but enough will remain to pack on some extra gear—preferably either more LRM 5s and ammo, or a couple of extra Medium Lasers and heat sinks. An AMS or two would also help.

If configured with more LRMs, the Owens makes a great hit-and-run 'Mech, striking quickly and then using its great speed to run away or maintain long range with the target.



PUMA

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 33/35
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Ferro-fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (210)
Walk/Run Speed: 64.8/97.2 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 4.5
Heat Sinks: 1.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 2.0
Armor: 6.0
Weapons: 12.5
Ammunition: 0.0
Equipment: 1.0

PUMA

TABLE 3-3. PUMA ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER-PPC (Clan) (2)	6	2	Left Arm, Right Arm
Flamer (Clan)	0.5	1	Center Torso
Double Heat Sink (Clan)	1	2	Left Torso
Targeting Computer (Clan)	1	1	Center Torso

The Puma, in its primary configuration, is a genuinely brilliant 'Mech design. It uses advanced Clan technologies to pack on weapons that you wouldn't think were possible on such a small 'Mech.

You'd think the Puma would sacrifice speed for its incredible firepower, but it actually possesses decent speed for a 'Mech of its size—better than that of the Firefly, but it's not in the same league as the Owens.

The Puma achieves results in two different ways. First, it uses Ferro-fibrous armor *and* an XL engine *and* an Endosteel internal structure, thus freeing up lots of tonnage with super-light internal components.

Second, it uses energy weapons that are very light. Energy weapons are a tradeoff: they generate lots of heat but make up for it by costing very little in tonnage. This tradeoff is almost always worth it for light 'Mechs, which don't have enough tonnage for heavier weapons.

The Targeting Computer is a great addition, making it easy to aim those PPCs at long range.

Of course, the Puma isn't perfect. For one thing, it can't torso twist. Also, with only one heat sink in addition to the base 10 included with its engine, it'll overheat in no time flat if the pilot doesn't pay close attention to heat concerns. And finally, its single Flamer, the only short-range weapon on the 'Mech, seems like an afterthought; you might as well get rid of it, and concentrate on fighting only at long range. Replace it with an AMS.

The Puma doesn't use all of its potential tonnage: the two tons that aren't used in the primary design can be used for two more double heat sinks, thus making the 'Mech a faster-cooling design.

As it stands, however, the Puma is an excellent model of a hit-and-run light 'Mech design. It has extreme-range, potent weapons to hit at distances where most others can't fight back, a Targeting Computer to ensure accuracy, and enough speed to maintain long range against most foes.

MEDIUM BATTLEMECHS

BattleMechs between 40 and 60 tons are considered to be medium sized. These 'Mechs can be highly effective, retaining much of the speed of Light 'Mechs but packing on additional weapons for a lethal punch.

When customizing medium BattleMechs, never forget that these 'Mechs need good speed—not as much as Light 'Mechs, but they need it nonetheless. A sluggish medium 'Mech is an easy target for larger, better-armed opponents.

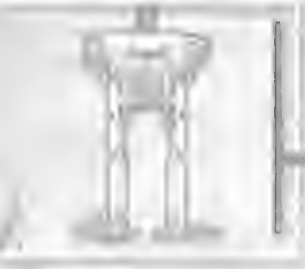
STRIDER

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 40/40
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Standard
Engine: Standard (240)
Walk/Run Speed: 64.8, 97.2 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 11.5
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 2.0
Armor: 7.5
Weapons: 6.5
Ammunition: 2.0
Equipment: 4.5



STRIDER

TABLE 3-4. STRIDER ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

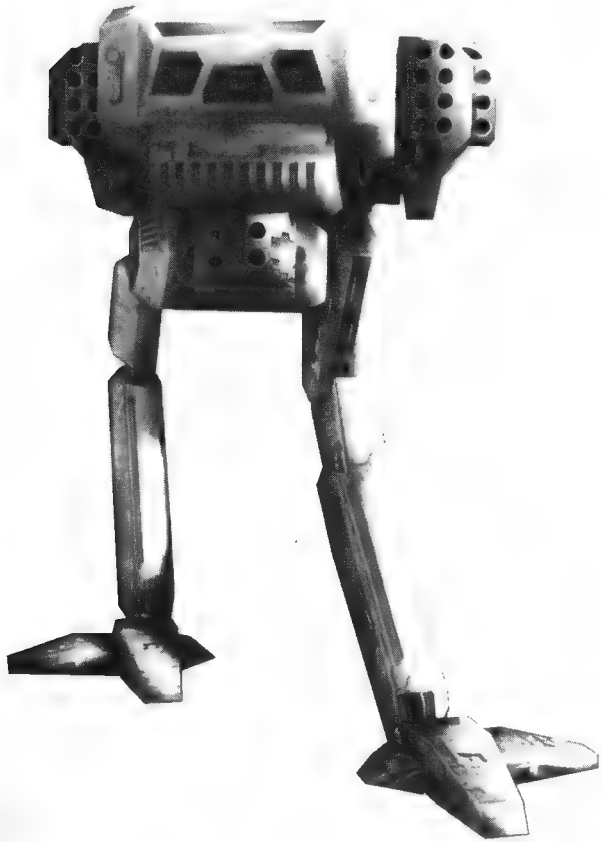
Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Small Laser	0.5	1	Head
SRM 6 (2)	3	2	Left Arm, Right Arm
SRM 6 Ammo (30 shots)	1	1	Left Torso, Right Torso
Artemis IV FCS (2)	1	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
DAP	1.5	2	Center Torso
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso

The Strider features decent armor and average speed for a 40-ton 'Mech, but it's not particularly inspired. It isn't fast enough to be a hit-and-run 'Mech, and besides, it lacks the long-range weapons necessary for that role. It has medium-range punch thanks to SRM 6s, but not enough to be a real warrior.

The Strider is, however, the lightest available 'Mech that can torso twist. If you want a fairly light 'Mech that can torso twist, take the Strider and give it a complete overhaul.

The first steps to the overhaul are to remove the Artemis IV FCS and BAP. You can even take out its weapons as well. Then switch its engine to XL and perhaps even move to Ferro-fibrous armor. This frees up loads of tonnage.

What should you do next? It's entirely decided by the direction you want to go with the Mech. If you want to make it a deadly Puma-like long-range hitter, add Clan ERPPCs. If you want to fight at closer range, use more SRMs or switch to a Medium Laser-based design. It's up to you—the key is to revamp this 'Mech with a definite concept and provide it with strengths. As it stands, this 'Mech is too general, lacking a clear-cut role.



SHADOW CAT

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 43.5/45
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Ferro-fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (270)
Walk/Run Speed: 64.8/97.2 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 7.5
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 1.5
Internal Structure: 2.5
Armor: 7.0
Weapons: 14.0
Ammunition: 2.0
Equipment: 3.0

SHADOW CAT

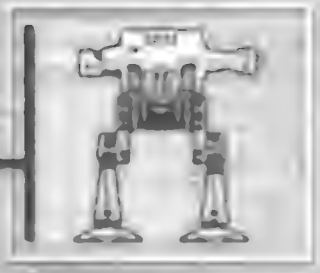
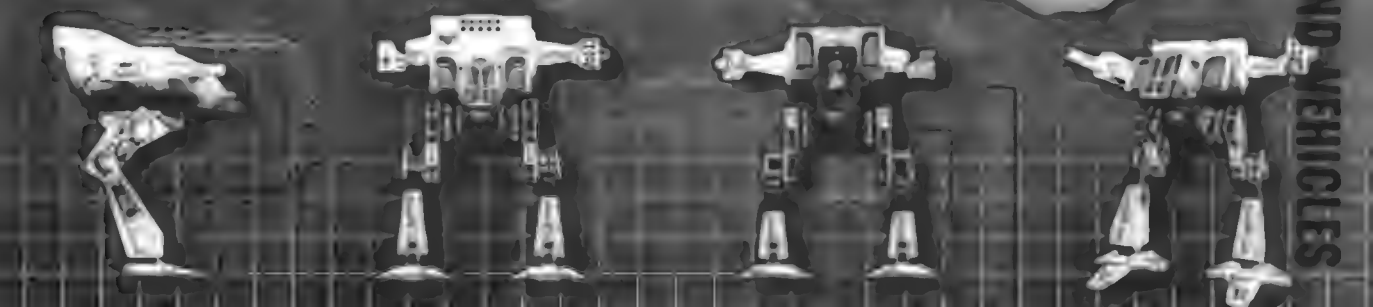


TABLE 3-5. SHADOW CAT ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium ER Laser (Clan) (2)	1	1	Right Torso
Gauss Rifle (Clan)	12	6	Left Arm
Gauss Rifle (Clan) Ammo (16 rounds)	2	1	Left Torso
BAP (Clan)	1	1	Right Torso
Jump Jets (Clan) (3)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso, Right Leg
MASC (Clan)	2	3	Left Torso



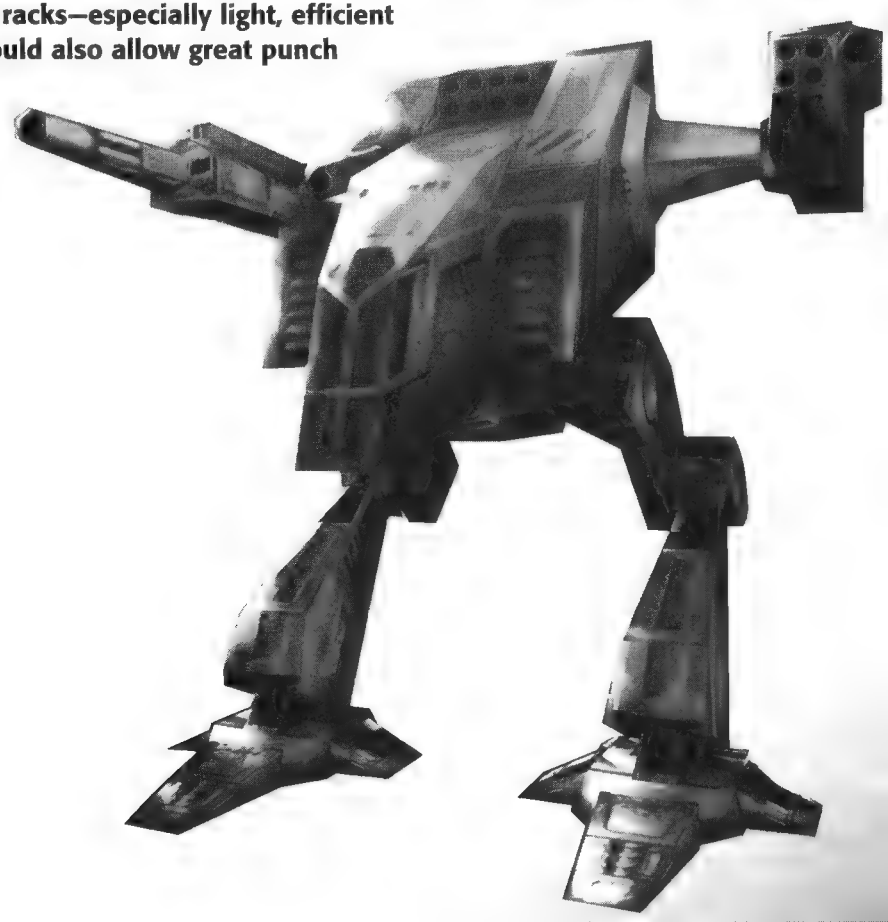
The Shadow Cat in its primary configuration is a potent 'Mech. By using Ferro-fibrous armor, an Endosteel internal structure, and an XL engine, it clears enough tonnage to mount a deadly Gauss Rifle. It's also quite well-armored, and faster than the average 'Mech. Plus, it's capable of torso twisting.

The Shadow Cat's weapons, the Clan Gauss Rifle and Clan Medium ER Lasers, are geared toward long-range fighting. Long range is a good range for a relatively light 'Mech to fight at, as it tends to allow the 'Mech to avoid damage.

The Shadow Cat's MASC and jump jets augment its speed and maneuverability, allowing it to stay away from most larger enemies and maintain long range during combat.

The Shadow Cat's only major weakness is that it's a little thin on weapons. The Gauss Rifle is impressive but it eats up lots of tonnage. If you want to stay with the 'Mech's general design, you might want to fill its spare ton with another Clan Medium ER Laser, then replace the BAP with another ton of Gauss Rifle ammo—just to make the Gauss Rifle last a bit longer.

You could also replace the Gauss Rifle with twin Clan ERPPCs or multiple LRM racks. The PPCs would add extra punch and ensure that you never run out of ammo. And LRM racks—especially light, efficient Clan LRM racks—would also allow great punch as well, and perhaps leave some extra room for more lasers and heat sinks.



BLACK HAWK

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 49/50
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (250)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 6.5
Heat Sinks: 8.0
Jump Jets: 1.5
Internal Structure: 5.0
Armor: 10.0
Weapons: 12.0
Ammunition: 0.0
Equipment: 0.0

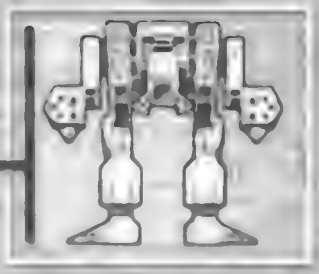
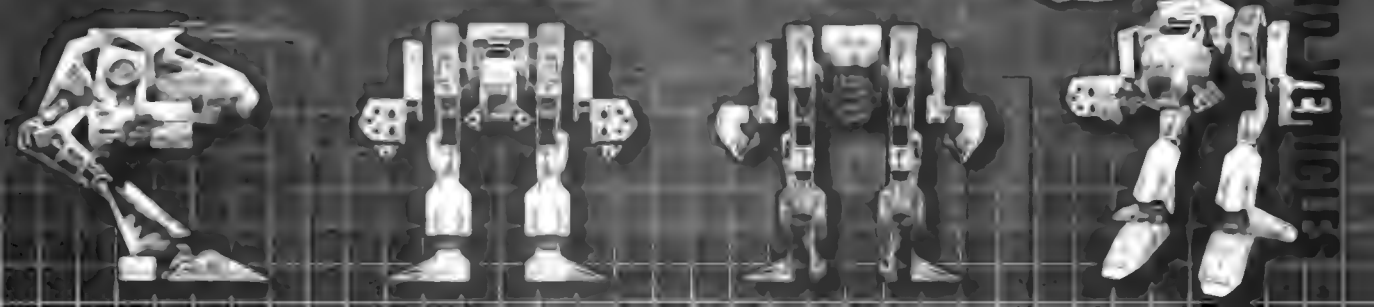


TABLE 3-6. BLACK HAWK ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER Medium Laser (Clan) (12)	1	1	Left Arm (6), Right Arm (6)
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (8)	1	2	Left Torso (3), Right Torso (3), Left Arm (1), Right Arm (1)
Jump Jets (Clan) (3)	0.5	1	Center Torso, Left Leg, Right Leg



The Black Hawk is a 'Mech that's easy to pilot. With 12 identical weapons onboard (Clan ER Medium Lasers), you'll want to maintain a distance of just under 600 meters from the enemy, which is the maximum range of those ER Lasers.

The Black Hawk has average speed and good armor. You can free up extra tonnage for more weapons by switching to an Endosteel internal structure. The Black Hawk also has an unused ton to begin with.

The concept of a medium-sized 'Mech that fights at medium-long range is a good one. You can, however, use the tonnage freed with an Endosteel internal structure to give it more of an edge. A larger engine or MASC would allow it to maintain the medium-long range at which it excels. Also, because this 'Mech is likely to be slugging it out with larger, better-armored 'Mechs, it needs all the protection it can get—so an AMS or two would help.

Bear in mind that you can cut down on heat by converting all those Clan ER Medium Lasers to regular Medium Lasers. That will also severely cut down on weapon range, but it'll increase the number of times you can fire repeatedly without overheating.

Also, you could remove two of the Clan ER Medium Lasers, replace them with two more heat sinks, and leave the rest. This would allow you to fire faster without overheating—and after all, 10 lasers is still a potent punch, especially when you're using group-fire mode.

This 'Mech can't torso twist, which may be a problem depending on your fighting style.

This is the sort of 'Mech that we approve of: A 'Mech with lots of similar weapons, so your fighting range is always clear. Our 'Mechs usually have two main weapons groups instead of one, however. A typical 'Mech would include a medium-range group (perhaps of Clan Medium Pulse Lasers), plus a long-range group (often consisting of LRMs, ER-PPCs, or Gauss Rifles), which would be useful for taking out turrets and killing small foes before they get too close.

The other common designs we employ include fast 'Mechs with potent long-range weapons (like the Puma's primary configuration) for hit-and-run combat and short-range heavy hitters. The short-range heavy hitters always have decent speed so they can get close to the enemy quickly, and they employ tough weapons like Ultra Autocannon 20s or massive groups of Flamers that can overheat the target almost instantly. These two general designs are usually reserved for multiplayer games, however.

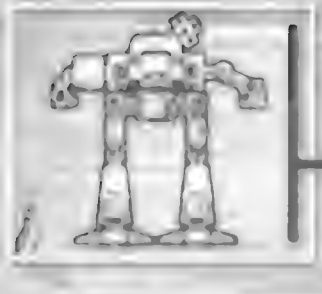
BUSHWHACKER

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 55/55
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-fibrous
Engine: XL (275)
Walk/Run Speed: 54/81 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

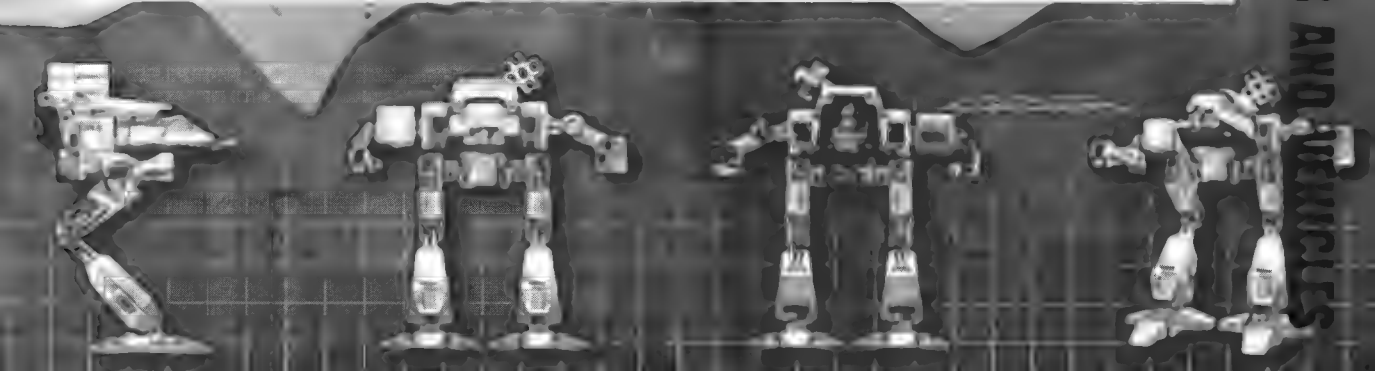
Engine: 8.0
Heat Sinks: 1.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 5.5
Armor: 9.0
Weapons: 22.0
Ammunition: 2.5
Equipment: 1.0



BUSHWACKER

TABLE 3-7. BUSHWHACKER ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
AC 10	12	7	Right Arm
AC 10 Ammo (10 rounds)	1	1	Right Torso
L ER Laser	5	2	Center Torso
LRM 5 (2)	2	1	Left Arm, Left Torso
LRM 5 Ammo (24 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
Machine Gun (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso
Machine Gun Ammo (200 rounds)	0.5	1	Right Torso
Heat Sink	1	1	Head
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso



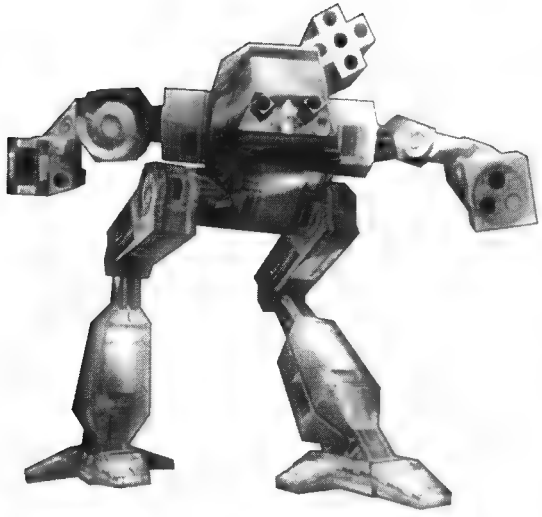
It's a capable 55-ton design with great potential, but some of that potential is lost in its standard configuration.

The Bushwhacker uses all available tonnage, and thanks to its Ferro-fibrous armor and XL engine, it uses its critical spaces quite efficiently. It can also torso twist.

If the Bushwhacker has a problem, it's the lack of a clear-cut role. Its speed is average for 'Mechs of its size (and larger), so it can't outrun many heavier foes—yet its armor isn't that tough, so it can't out-gun heavier foes in a fight.

To rectify these problems, first tear out all the weapons except the LRM 5s. The Machine Guns are too weak to bother with, and they don't have enough ammo anyway. The ER Large Laser has nice range but it'll overheat the 'Mech with only a few shots. And the AC 10 not only has too little ammo, but at 12 tons it's very heavy for a 55-ton 'Mech.

Replace these weapons according to what you want to achieve. A common solution is to add more LRMs for potent long-range punch, add several Medium Lasers for closer-range power, and a few heat sinks to keep heat under control. You also can add an AMS or two for defense, and improve the engine a few notches so the Bushwhacker can outrun larger foes.



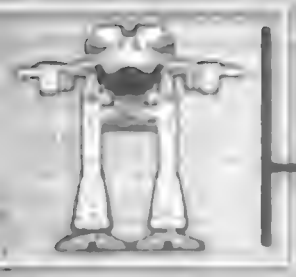
CHAMPION

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 60/60
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-fibrous
Engine: Standard (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 19.0
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 6.0
Armor: 8.0
Weapons: 17.0
Ammunition: 3.0
Equipment: 1.0



CHAMPION

TABLE 3-8. CHAMPION ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Small Laser (2)	0.5	1	Center Torso (2)
Medium Laser (2)	1	1	Left Torso (2)
LB-10X AC	11	6	Right Torso
LB-10X AC Ammo (20 rounds)	2	1	Right Torso
SRM 6	3	2	Left Torso
SRM 6 Ammo (15 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
Artemis IV FCS	1	1	Left Torso

The Champion is an old Inner Sphere design. Though the primary variant uses all available tonnage, you can free up almost 10 tons simply by switching to an XL engine—so there's lots of room for improvement.

The Champion possesses average speed for a 'Mech its size. It could stand a few more tons of armor, and perhaps either a slight engine upgrade or MASC so it can outmaneuver larger 'Mechs. Also, note that it can't torso twist.

The Champion's weapon systems are geared primarily toward medium- and short-range combat. It possesses no true long-range weapons, and it depends heavily on ammunition. When modifying the 'Mech, you might want to remove the Small Lasers and the LB-10X AC, and replace them with more SRM 6s and ammunition, and perhaps a few spare heat sinks. These changes would make the 'Mech a highly effective close-range fighter.

Of course, because all of this 'Mech's weapon systems are standard, you could vastly improve on them by replacing them with Clan systems. This is especially true of the SRM 6s, because the Clan versions weigh only half as much as the standard versions.

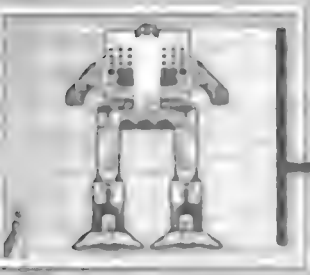
VULTURE

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 60/60
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

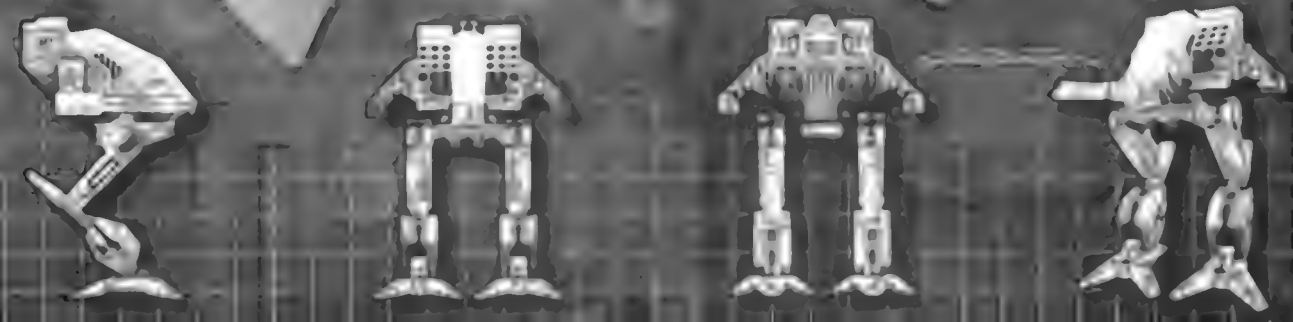
Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 2.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 6.0
Armor: 8.5
Weapons: 26.0
Ammunition: 2.0
Equipment: 0.0



VULTURE

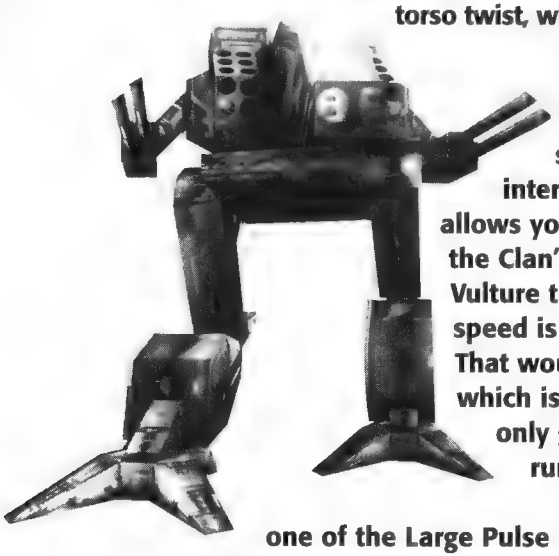
TABLE 3-9. VULTURE ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
LRM 20 (Clan) (2)	5	4	Left Torso, Right Torso
LRM 20 (Clan) Ammo (12 shots)	5	4	Left Torso, Right Torso
Medium Pulse Laser (Clan) (2)	2	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
Large Pulse Laser (Clan) (2)	6	2	Left Arm, Right Arm
Heat Sink (Clan) (2)	1	1	Left Torso, Right Torso
CASE (Clan) (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso



The Vulture in its primary configuration is an admirably good design. It's a long-range predator, attacking from afar. It was designed as a fire support 'Mech that would rain destruction on the enemy while the enemy was busy fighting other 'Mechs. However, the Vulture can be a formidable 'Mech on its own, as well.

While the Vulture is geared toward long-range combat, its battery of Large and Medium Pulse Lasers also can be used up close. The 'Mech can torso twist, which typically makes close-range fighting easier.



There are a few easy improvements you can make to the Vulture, especially if you wish to use it as your primary 'Mech instead of a fire support 'Mech. First, switch to an Endosteel internal structure, which frees up three tons and allows you to add extra equipment. We suggest adding the Clan's version of MASC, which would allow the Vulture to outrun most large enemies (because its speed is only average) and thus maintain long range. That would leave a spare ton for more LRM 20 ammo, which is sorely needed; as it stands, the Vulture can only group-fire its two LRM 20s six times before running dry.

To further tweak the design, you could replace one of the Large Pulse Lasers with a third Medium Pulse Laser. This change gives the Vulture slightly less medium–long-range punch, but frees up tonnage for still more LRM 20 ammo and extra heat sinks. This configuration is suitable for missions where Mobile Field Bases (MFBs) are unavailable and you need all the ammo you can carry.

HEAVY BATTLEMECHS

'Mechs between 65 and 80 tons are referred to as "heavy 'Mechs." At this size, speed is somewhat less important than power. When customizing these 'Mechs, you should look to use weapons that can deliver a true knockout punch, leveling most targets in a matter of seconds.

While it's still possible to deliver decent speed at these tonnages, it becomes less and less efficient as the 'Mech's overall tonnage increases. Instead, most heavy 'Mechs rely on their heavy armor to see them through a fight.

CAULDRON-BORN

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 65/65
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Ferro-fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (325)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 12.0 tons
Heat Sinks: 3.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 3.5
Armor: 9.5
Weapons: 23.0
Ammunition: 7.0
Equipment: 0.0

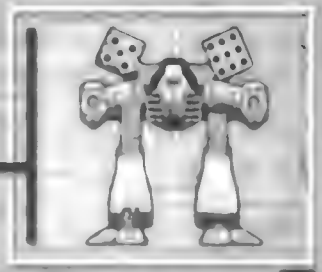
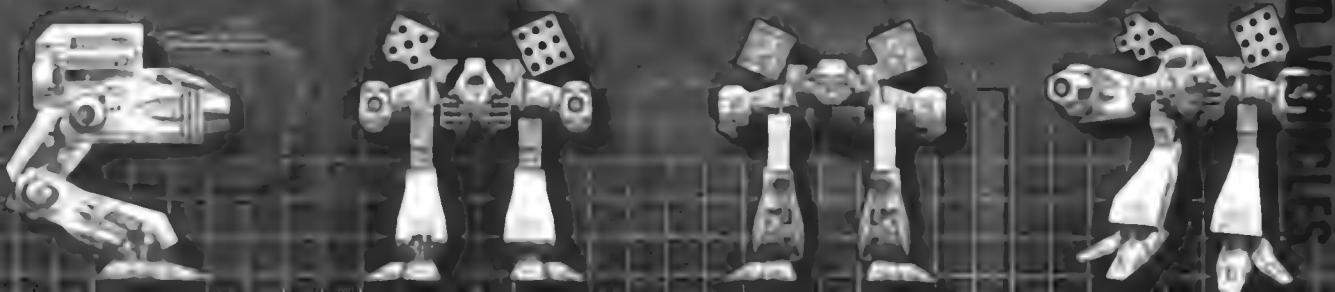


TABLE 3-10. CAULDRON-BORN ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium ER Laser (Clan)	1	1	Left Torso
Gauss Rifle (Clan)	12	6	Right Arm
Gauss Rifle Ammo (16 rounds)	2	1	Right Torso
LB-5X AC (Clan)	7	4	Left Arm
LB-5X AC (Clan) Ammo (40 rounds)	2	1	Left Arm
LRM 10 (Clan)	2.5	1	Left Torso
LRM 10 (Clan) Ammo (24 shots)	2	1	Left Torso
SRM 2 (Clan)	0.5	1	Right Torso
SRM 2 (Clan) Ammo (50 shots)	1	1	Right Torso
Heat Sink (3) (Clan)	1	1	Center Torso, Left Torso, Right Torso



The Cauldron-Born is well armored and reasonably fast, and its primary configuration uses all the usual tricks—XL engine, Ferro-fibrous armor, Endosteel internal structure—to free up extra tonnage. However, this configuration is likely to be a pain to pilot.

Aside from its inability to torso twist, the Cauldron-Born suffers from a wild disparity of weapons and a slight identity crisis. With no two identical weapons, the Cauldron-Born is likely to send its pilot scrambling to decide which weapons to use at any given time, and spending too much time switching between them. Most of the 'Mech's weapons are geared toward long range, suggesting this 'Mech should fight at long range, but the differences in its long-range weapon systems make them difficult to use all at once.

There are other questionable design decisions as well. For example, heat sinks are usually helpful, but in this case three heat sinks seem out of place on a 'Mech specializing almost entirely in low-heat ballistic and missile weapons. And the SRM 2, the 'Mech's only short-range weapon, is ineffective enough by itself that it can easily be omitted.

If you decide to use this 'Mech, simply scrap all the weapons and start with a clean slate, building it into something new and focused.

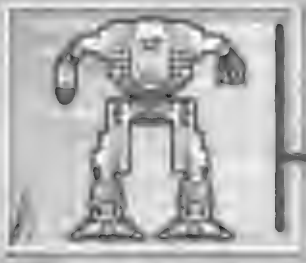
AVATAR

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 70/70
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (280)
Walk/Run Speed: 43.2/64.8 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 8.0
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 7.0
Armor: 12.0
Weapons: 28.0
Ammunition: 6.0
Equipment: 3.0



A-V-A-T-A-R

TABLE 3-11. AVATAR ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium Laser (2)	1	1	Center Torso (2)
LB-10X AC	11	6	Right Arm
LB-10X AC Ammo (20 rounds)	2	1	Right Torso
LRM 10 (2)	5	2	Left Torso, Right Torso
LRM 10 Ammo (24 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
Machine Gun (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso
Machine Gun Ammo (200 rounds)	1	1	Right Torso
Medium Pulse Laser (2)	2	1	Left Arm
Artemis IV FCS	1	1	Right Torso
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Right Torso

The Avatar is a favorite because of its lean, distinctive look and ability to torso twist. Below the surface, though, this 'Mech isn't quite as pretty. Its primary variant isn't as efficient as it could be; several questionable design decisions have been made.

First, the Avatar is both a little light on armor and fairly sluggish. It's comparable in speed to other Inner Sphere designs of its size, but Clan OmniMechs of this tonnage (and even slightly larger) regularly top out at 86 kph instead of 65 kph.

Second, the Avatar suffers from questionable weapons and equipment selection. Its pair of LRM 10s is formidable, but there's a wider variety of weapons than necessary—for example, instead of using either regular lasers or Pulse Lasers, this 'Mech uses both. Also, there aren't enough heat sinks available to continuously group-fire all four lasers for any length of time.

If you only want to make minor changes to the Avatar, switch its internal structure to Endosteel and scrap the Machine Guns and ammo. This will gain you several extra tons. Also, substitute any weapons you can for Clan weapons, which are much lighter. All these changes will give you lots of extra room, which we recommend using for extra heat sinks and armor, plus another Medium Pulse Laser or two.

Of course, you might be better off rethinking the entire design. If the 'Mech is going to remain this slow, it should probably have more long-range weapons because it won't be able to quickly close the gap with smaller foes. Alternatively, you could add engine size or MASC to solve the speed problem.

THOR

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 67/70
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (350)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 15.0
Heat Sinks: 4.0
Jump Jets: 2.0
Internal Structure: 7.0
Armor: 9.5
Weapons: 19.5
Ammunition: 3.0
Equipment: 0.0

TABLE 3-12. THOR ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER-PPC (Clan)	6	2	Right Arm
LB-10X AC (Clan)	10	5	Left Arm
LB-10X AC (Clan) Ammo (10 rounds)	1	1	Left Arm
LRM 15 (Clan)	3.5	2	Left Torso
LRM 15 (Clan) Ammo (16 shots)	2	1	Left Torso
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (4)	1	2	Left Torso (2), Right Torso (2)
CASE (Clan) (2)	0.0	0	Left Torso, Left Arm
Jump Jets (Clan) (4)	0.5	1	Left Leg (2), Right Leg (2)

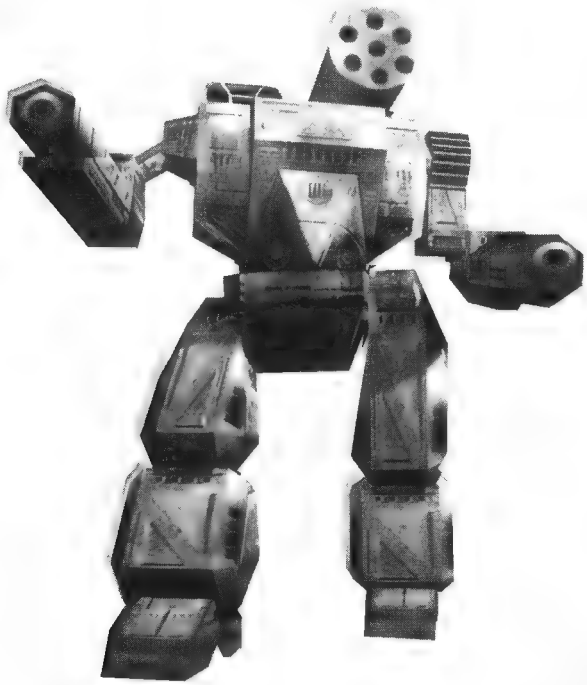
The Thor, in its primary configuration, is a potent 'Mech. As is typical of heavy Clan 'Mechs, it's as fast as most medium Inner Sphere 'Mechs. This speed, plus the agility bestowed by its jump jets, gives the Thor excellent mobility for such a large design. This 'Mech can also torso twist.

The Thor's weapons selection is a bit on the light side for such a large 'Mech. There are only three weapon systems—all potent, but only three nonetheless. They're all geared toward long or medium-long range.

Improving the Thor is easy. Its primary variant starts out with three unoccupied tons, and a switch to Endosteel internal structure will free up another 3.5 tons. Use these extra tons to pack on more armor, as the Thor's initial armor isn't very thick. A few more double heat sinks also would be good, as would an extra weapon or two.

If you want to go a step further, it may be a good idea to consolidate the Thor's disparate weapon groups. For example, you could replace the Clan LB-10X AC with another Clan ER-PPC, then use the leftover tonnage for more heat sinks. That would add to the Thor's effective range, and consolidate its weapon systems for easier firing.

Regardless of what weapons you add to the Thor, the groundwork for a great 'Mech is already in place.



MAD CAT

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 75/75
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Ferro-fibrous (Clan)
Engine: XL (375)
Walk/Run Speed: 54.0/81.0 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 19.5
Heat Sinks: 7.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 4.0
Armor: 12.0
Weapons: 23.0
Ammunition: 3.0
Equipment: 0.0

MAD CAT

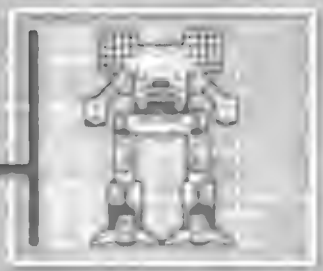
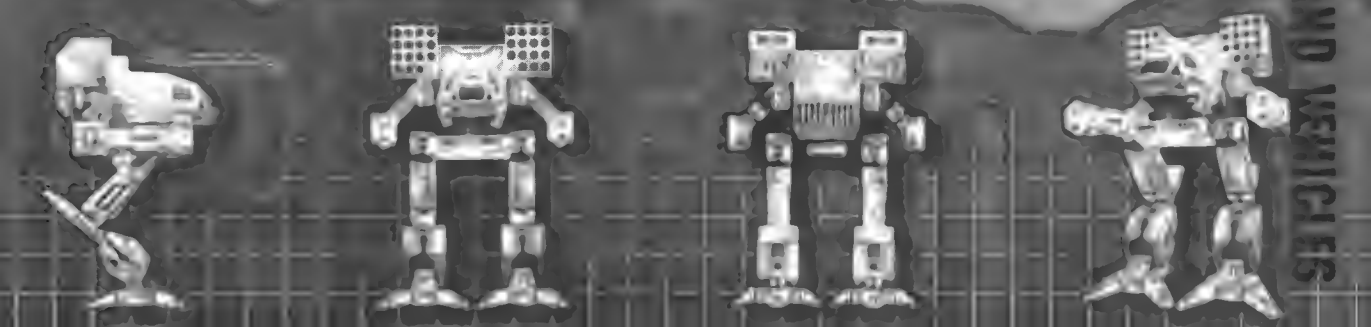


TABLE 3-13. MAD CAT ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Small ER Laser (Clan)	0.5	1	Left Torso
Medium ER Laser (Clan) (2)	1	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
Large ER Laser (Clan) (2)	4	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
LRM 20 (Clan) (2)	5	4	Left Torso, Right Torso
LRM 20 (Clan) Ammo (12 shots)	1	1	Left Torso, Right Torso
Machine Gun (Clan) (2)	0.3	1	Center Torso, Right Torso
Machine Gun (Clan) Ammo (200 rounds)	1	1	Right Torso
Medium Pulse Laser (Clan)	2	1	Left Torso
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (7)	1	2	Left Torso, Right Torso, Left Arm, Right Arm (2), Left Leg, Right Leg
CASE (Clan) (2)	0.0	0	Left Torso

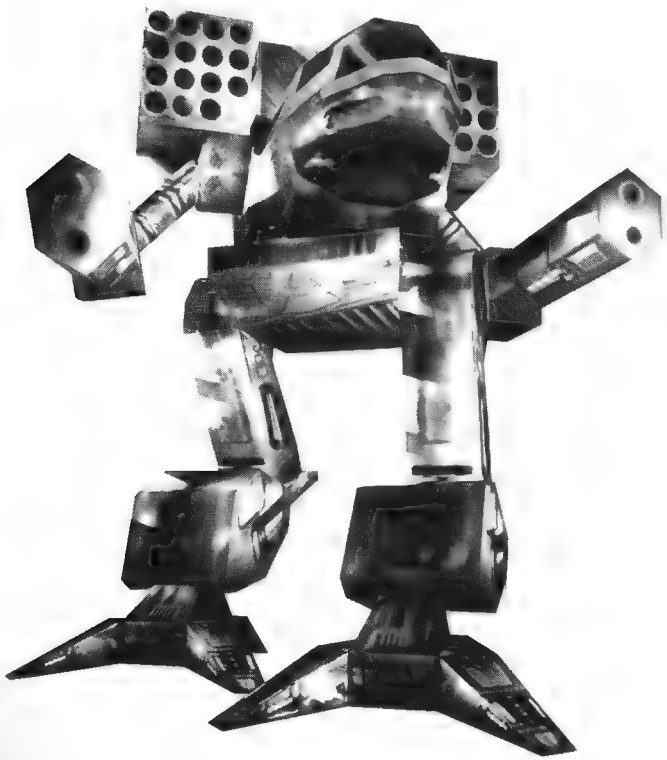


The Mad Cat makes the most of its tonnage. It's one of the best "off-the-rack" 'Mech designs available, featuring an eminently functional design in its primary configuration.

Featuring both excellent speed for a 'Mech of its size and a full complement of armor, you won't need to improve the Mad Cat in either area. The Mad Cat also is capable of torso twisting.

The Mad Cat is one of few 'Mechs that wastes no tonnage or critical spaces. It uses all the usual tricks to eat up critical spaces while saving tonnage, and as a result it manages to use *all* of its critical spaces and *all* of its tonnage. Thus, you won't have to do much to get this 'Mech into fighting shape; it's already there.

You may want to play around with the weapons, however. You'll probably want to lose the Machine Guns, and you might want to consolidate the lasers somewhat by making them all Pulse or standard lasers. Alternatively, you could rearrange the weapons completely. Regardless, though, you won't have to do much with the chassis; this 'Mech is potent from the moment you get it.



ORION

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 75/75
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 43.2/64.8 kph

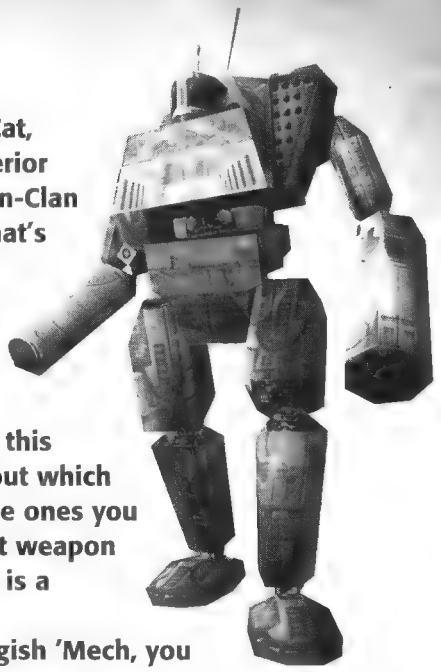
WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 1.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 7.5
Armor: 14.0
Weapons: 28.0
Ammunition: 8.0
Equipment: 1.0

ORION

TABLE 3-14. ORION ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium Laser (2)	1	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
LB-10X AC	11	6	Right Torso
LB-10X AC Ammo (20 rounds)	2	1	Right Torso
LRM 20	10	5	Left Arm
LRM 20 Ammo (12 shots)	2	1	Left Torso
NARC	3	2	Center Torso
NARC Ammo (12 pods)	2	1	Left Torso
SRM 4	2	1	Left Torso
SRM 4 Ammo (50 shots)	2	1	Left Torso
Double Heat Sink	1	3	Left Torso
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso



The Orion is a big step down from the Clan's Mad Cat, which weighs the same amount but possesses superior attributes. Aside from the disadvantage of using non-Clan weaponry, the Orion suffers from a lack of speed that's typical of Inner Sphere 'Mechs of its size. Also, the Orion doesn't use its critical spaces as efficiently as the Mad Cat. Fortunately, the Orion *is* capable of torso twisting.

Switch the Orion to an Endosteel internal structure and drop the heavy NARC missile beacon; this nets you a cool 8.5 tons to work with. Also, figure out which weapons you like and which you don't, and drop the ones you don't. As it stands, the Orion has too many different weapon systems, and switching among them during combat is a pain.

If you resign yourself to having a relatively sluggish 'Mech, you can really beef up the Orion's firepower with all this spare tonnage. Also, switching to Clan weaponry, if any is available, will net you enough spare tonnage to speed up the Orion *and* give it more punch.

ASSAULT BATTLEMECHS

'Mechs weighing between 85 and 100 tons are Assault 'Mechs. These kings of the battlefield are typically slow and ponderous, and incapable of dodging most enemy fire. These 'Mechs can pack veritable arsenals, and rely on both their sheer firepower and durable armor to see them through most battles.

When customizing Assault 'Mechs, be sure to add enough heat sinks to allow smooth and continuous firing of primary weapon groups. With so much available tonnage, it's tempting to load up on weapons, but if you neglect heat sinks you won't be able to fire them often enough.

SUNDER

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 90/90
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (360)
Walk/Run Speed: 43.2/64.8 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 16.5
Heat Sinks: 5.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 9.0
Armor: 16.5
Weapons: 32.0
Ammunition: 4.0
Equipment: 0.0

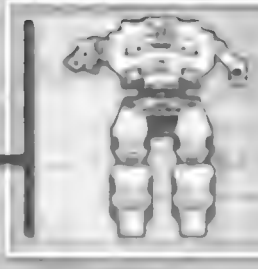
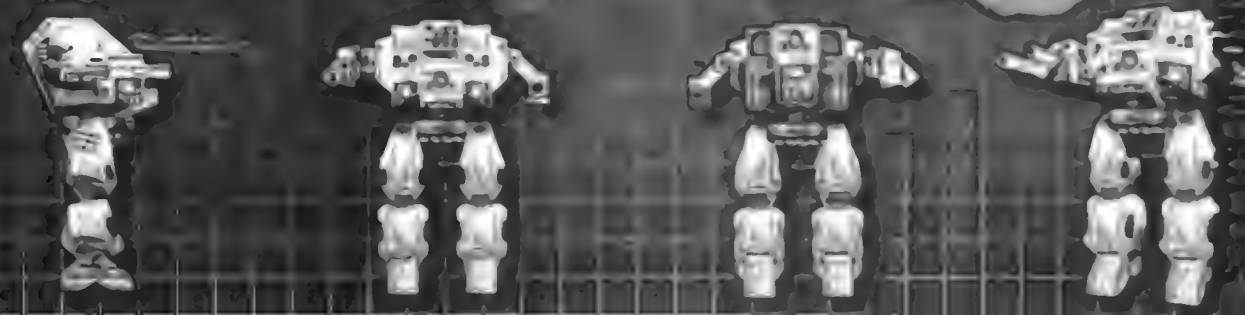


TABLE 3-15. SUNDER ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
AC 20	14	10	Left Arm
AC 20 Ammo (10 rounds)	2	1	Left Torso
Medium Laser (2)	1	1	Center Torso (2)
Large Laser (2)	8	2	Right Arm (2)
SRM 4 (3)	3	1	Head, Left Torso, Right Torso
SRM 4 Ammo (50 shots)	3	1	Right Torso
Double Heat Sink (5)	1	3	Left Torso (2), Right Torso (2), Right Arm



The Sunder compares favorably with other Inner Sphere 'Mechs, featuring speed that's comparable to many smaller Inner Sphere designs and *better* than the Supernova, a Clan design of the same tonnage. It also features thick armor, and it can torso twist.

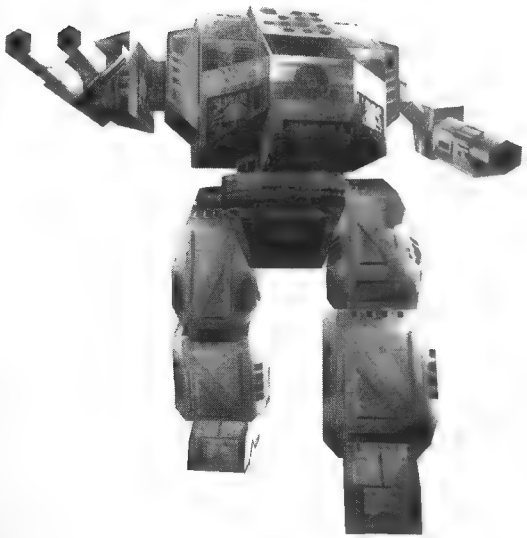
The Sunder's primary variant doesn't have many free critical spaces, so the usual tricks of switching to an Endosteel internal structure or Ferro-fibrous armor won't work.

There are, however, ways to greatly improve the Sunder. First, the Sunder suffers from its use of Inner Sphere weapons. Replace these with Clan weapons and you'll free up lots of tonnage and space.

Second, the Sunder has lots of double heat sinks but it also has an AC 20 and SRM 4s, which aren't terribly heat-intensive weapons. This seems like a waste. It might be a better idea to lose the AC 20, thus freeing up lots of tonnage, and add an ER-PPC and extra double heat sinks in its place. Doing so converts the Sunder into a primarily energy-weapon-based 'Mech with serious long-range punch, and enough heat sinks to handle its massive heat production.

Alternatively, remove the AC 20 and switch to an Endosteel internal structure. This leaves you with a limited number of critical spaces but clears a good deal of tonnage. Then, fill up that extra tonnage with weapons that pack good punch but use very few critical spaces—Clan ER Large Lasers come to mind.

Finally, understand that most 'Mechs of this size aren't this fast. If you feel like trimming down the engine size somewhat, you can create even more tonnage for weapons and heat sinks.



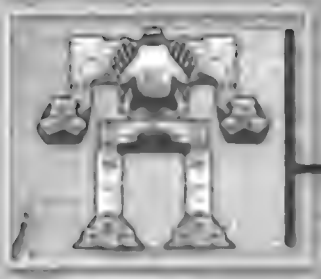
SUPERNOVA

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 86/90
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: Standard (270)
Walk/Run Speed: 32/54 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 14.5
Heat Sinks: 16.0
Jump Jets: 2.0
Internal Structure: 9.0
Armor: 14.5
Weapons: 24.0
Ammunition: 0.0
Equipment: 0.0



SUPERNOVA

TABLE 3-16. SUPERNOVA ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER Large Laser (Clan) (6)	4	1	Left Arm (3), Right Arm (3)
Heat Sink (Clan) (16)	1	1	Center Torso, Left Torso (8), Right Torso (7)
Jump Jets (Clan) (4)	0.5	1	Center Torso, Left Torso, Right Torso (2)

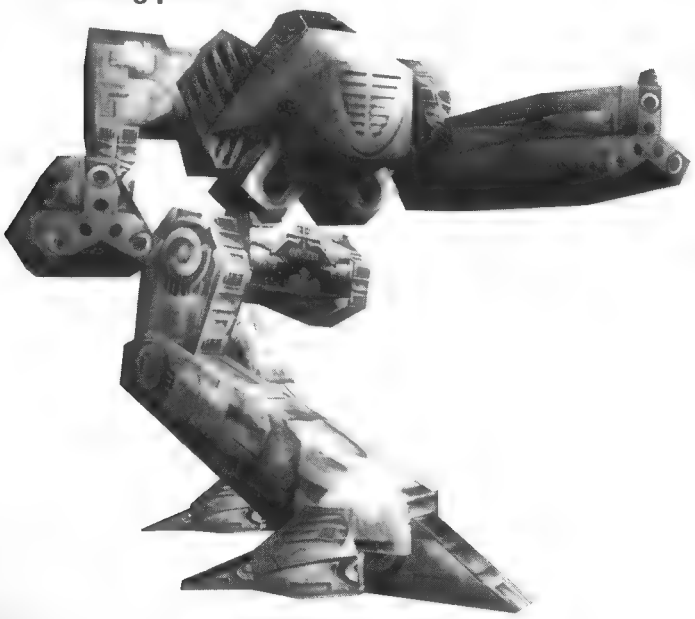
The Supernova is unusually sluggish for a Clan design, topping out at 54 kph. However, coaxing more speed out of a 'Mech of this weight is usually difficult, and very costly in terms of tonnage. You'll probably want to leave the speed alone, therefore. (Besides, the jump jets help out with mobility.)

Usually, use multiple, identical weapon systems. Having multiple systems of the same type allows you to easily group and group-fire your weapons, and eliminates the need to cycle between multiple weapon groups. But the Supernova takes this principle a step too far.

The problem is that the Clan ER Large Laser simply generates too much heat to be added in such large quantities. Group-fire all six of these weapons and you'll instantly destroy your 'Mech. Try it—your 'Mech will be blown to smithereens by the excessive heat. No amount of heat sinks will save you; while heat sinks help to bring down heat levels quickly, they don't prevent the *initial* surge of heat—and that's what destroys your 'Mech.

Even removing two of the ER Large Lasers and replacing them with *more* heat sinks just doesn't do the trick. You'll still have problems with heat spikes and you won't deal particularly good damage.

Here's a plan that'll make the Supernova a genuine powerhouse: Rip out all the ER Large Lasers and 8 of those 16 heat sinks. In their place, put in a pair of Clan Gauss Rifles with lots of ammo (maybe six tons) and a battery of, say, six Clan Medium Pulse Lasers. Switch the internal structure to Endosteel to free up still more tonnage, and use it for a Targeting Computer, some AMSs, and anything else you'd care to throw on. Now you've got a deadly long-range punch that won't have any heat problems, and a battery of lasers for medium-range finishing power.



ANNIHILATOR

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 100/100
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 32.4/48.6 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 5.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 10.0
Armor: 12.5
Weapons: 52.0
Ammunition: 4.0
Equipment: 1.0

TABLE 3-17. ANNIHILATOR ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
LB 10X AC (4)	11	6	Left Torso, Right Torso, Left Arm, Right Arm
Medium Pulse Laser (4)	2	1	Center Torso (2), Left Arm, Right Arm
Heat Sink (5)	1	1	Head, Left Leg (2), Right Leg (2)
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Right Torso

The Annihilator is a 100-ton BattleMech, making it one of the biggest 'Mechs in existence. Its top speed of 48.6 kph is sluggish by any standard, but this is typical of 100-tonners; you shouldn't expect agility from such a large chassis.

More significant, though, is the Annihilator's lack of armor; it doesn't carry nearly as much armor as it should. Also, the Annihilator's weapons are questionable; the four LB-10X ACs generate massive punch at medium range, but they're ammo-hungry and they don't leave room for much else. Also, the four Medium Pulse Lasers are relatively potent, but their range is almost identical to that of the LB-10Xs, so you'll constantly have to choose which group to fire. It might be better to have a long-range weapon group and a medium-range weapon group instead of two medium-range groups.

The Annihilator's primary configuration doesn't use many weight-saving components; it has an XL engine but a standard internal structure and standard armor. Despite this fact, it doesn't have many critical spaces to spare. This is largely because it's loaded with LB-10X ACs. The standard LB-10X is a relatively inefficient weapon, and adding four of them to the Annihilator only compounds the inefficiency by four.

Here's a plan that will make the Annihilator live up to its name, assuming that you have the equipment for it. Bear in mind that this is only one way to improve the 'Mech.

Rip out all the weapons. Leave the standard internal structure, standard armor, and XL engine in place. Add three Clan ER PPCs and seven Clan Medium Pulse Lasers. Pack on a total of 19 tons of armor, the most the 'Mech can bear, and load on 19 heat sinks, bringing the grand total of heat sinks to 29 (19 plus the 10 built into the engine). Add two Clan AMS, Clan MASC, and a Clan Targeting Computer.

Your 'Mech now has awe-inspiring punch at extreme range due to the trio of ER PPCs, plus a Targeting Computer to help you aim. It has great medium-range and close-range stopping power thanks to the Pulse Lasers. It has enough heat sinks to handle the massive energy generated by its weapons (though you'll still need to exercise caution). It has great defense thanks to maxed-out armor and twin AMSs. Finally, it's still slow, but the Clan MASC helps it generate a little extra speed.

Now *that's* what a 'Mech called an Annihilator should look like.

DAISHI

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 100/100
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 32.4/48.6 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 12.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 10.0
Armor: 19.0
Weapons: 40.5
Ammunition: 3.0
Equipment: 0.0

TABLE 3-18. DAISHI ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Large ER Laser (Clan) (4)	4	1	Left Arm (2), Right Arm (2)
LRM 10 (Clan)	2.5	1	Left Torso
LRM 10 (Clan) (12 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
Medium Pulse Laser (Clan) (4)	2	1	Left Arm (2), Right Arm (2)
Ultra AC 5 (Clan) (2)	7	3	Left Arm, Right Arm
Ultra AC 5 (Clan) Ammo (40 rounds)	1	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (12)	1	2	Center Torso, Left Torso (2), Right Torso (5), Left Arm, Right Arm, Left Leg, Right Leg
CASE (Clan) (3)	0.5	1	Left Torso, Left Arm, Right Arm

The Daishi is a massive, slow, yet terrifying beast, much like the Annihilator. It does a good job of using its available critical spaces and tonnage, so if you have a quarrel with its design, it's likely to be with the weapon selection.

The Daishi does a good job of using multiple identical weapons, like its four Large ER Lasers. However, its weapon and equipment selections aren't totally optimized. The 'Mech's 12 extra double heat sinks are great for funneling away excess heat created by the Large ER Lasers, but they're completely unnecessary for the cool-firing Clan Ultra AC 5s.

Because the 'Mech already has a surfeit of heat sinks, it would seem reasonable to scrap the AC 5s in favor of weapons that would match already-existing systems. For example, if you scrapped the AC 5s you could add a second LRM 10 and ammo, two more Medium Pulse Lasers, three more double heat sinks, and an AMS for defense. Doing so simplifies the weapon groups and ensures that every group has enough weapons to be worth firing.

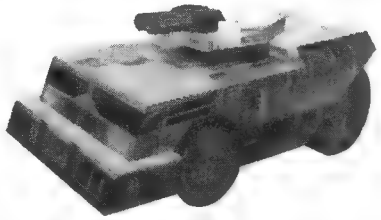
Ultimately, though, the Daishi is a great chassis to experiment with. It has so much room that you can experiment with all sorts of weapon combinations.

VEHICLES

The following vehicles are all found in the single-player campaign. MFBs are on your side; the rest aren't. Learn these vehicles' strengths and weaknesses so you can deal with them appropriately whenever they appear.

APC

Tonnage: 10
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 65/97 kph
Weapons: 2 Machine Guns



The APC is hardly a serious threat, but on the other hand, it can't be ignored. It features good speed and twin Machine Guns.

The best way to deal with APCs is to destroy them early, preferably from long range. A few shots with just about any weapon will do; don't waste valuable Gauss Rifle or heavy Autocannon ammo on them.

Since APCs' Machine Guns have severely limited range, you should be able to destroy them before they get close enough to scratch your 'Mech's paint.

DONAR

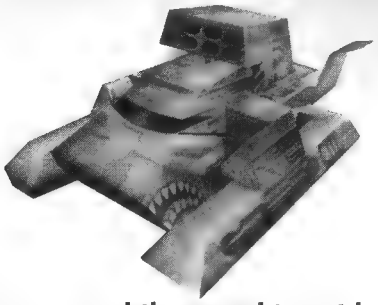
Tonnage: 21
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 97/151 kph
Weapons: ER Large Laser, 2 Streak SRM 2s

This Clan helicopter likes to engage in long-range attacks, but its Streak SRM 2s make it a legitimate threat at close range as well.

Dispatch this enemy as quickly as possible, using accurate lasers or homing missiles instead of Autocannons—this is a maneuverable craft, so you need all the accuracy you can get.

Don't leave the Donar around and allow it to bother you. Take it out quickly so you can concentrate on other threats.

HARASSER MISSILE TANK



Tonnage: 25
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 108/162 kph
Weapons: 2 SRM 6s

The Harasser features potent short-range weapons, and the speed to get into suitable range to use those weapons.

The best policy is to shred the Harasser from afar with potent long-range weapons. Destroying it should be a high priority, as its twin SRM 6s have the potential to deal serious damage.

The value of the AMS will become apparent if you allow Harassers to get within SRM range; with twin AMSs, you won't have much to worry about from the Harasser.

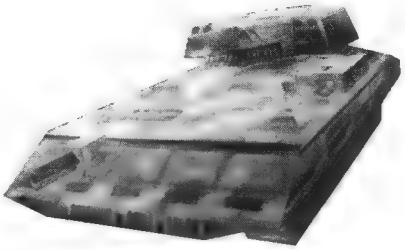
STRIKER LIGHT TANK

Tonnage: 35
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 54/86 kph
Weapons: SRM 6, LRM 10

The Striker can attack from both long and short range, but you should endeavor to fight it at long range whenever possible, where it can only use its LRMs. At medium range it can employ both LRMs and SRMs, and possibly become a problem.

Again, AMS will go a long way toward rendering the Striker's threat minimal.

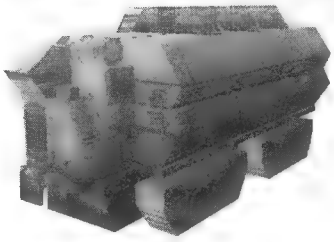
BULLDOG MEDIUM TANK



Tonnage: 60
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 43/65 kph
Weapons: Large Laser, 2 SRM 4s, 2 Machine Guns

Bulldogs are sluggish but surprisingly durable. It's advised that you fight Bulldogs at long range. At that range, they'll be able to attack with their Large Lasers, but they won't be able to return fire with their SRM 4s and their Machine Guns.

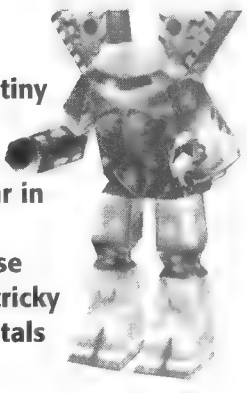
MOBILE FIELD BASE (MFB)



Tonnage: 200
Cruising/Flanking Speed: 43/64 kph
Weapons: None

Mobile Field Bases are unarmed support vehicles that follow you throughout the campaign. They not only repair and refit your 'Mechs, but they hold the salvaged 'Mechs and equipment that you gather as you proceed through the campaign. These vehicles are invaluable, so you can't allow them to be destroyed. Protect them when they're threatened, and never order them into areas that you haven't already cleared of enemy influence.

ELEMENTALS



Elementals are humans in heavy powered armor—essentially, tiny 'Mechs. They can be equipped with a wide range of diminutive weapons, and though they're hardly a major threat when they attack alone, they can be hard to deal with if they appear in swarms.

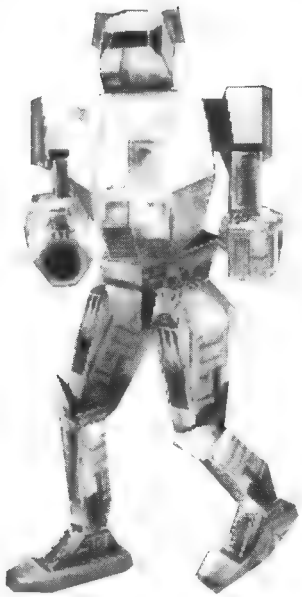
Missiles, especially Streak SRMs, are a good weapon to use against Elementals; hitting them with other weapons can be tricky because of their extreme agility. You don't have to hit Elementals hard to destroy them, but hitting them in the first place can be a tricky proposition.

NEW BATTLEMECHS

The following BattleMechs appear in *Pirate's Moon*, but not in the original *MechWarrior III*. These new BattleMechs are listed in ascending order of weight.

Just because these 'Mechs are new to the battlefield, don't assume that they're superior to the old designs. In fact, many of these "new" 'Mechs are actually based on older technology than the 'Mechs available in *MechWarrior III*. All of these 'Mechs can be useful—but it's up to you to configure them in a way that best suits your combat style.

CLINT IIC



'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 40/40
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (240)
Walk/Run Speed: 65/97 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 6.0
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 1.0
Internal Structure: 10.0
Armor: 7.0
Weapons: 12.0
Ammunition: 4.0
Equipment: 0.0

TABLE 3-19. CLINT IIC ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium ER Laser (Clan) (2)	1	1	Left Torso, Center Torso
LB-10X AC (Clan)	10	5	Right Arm
LB-10X AC (Clan) Ammo (40 shots)	1	1	Right Torso

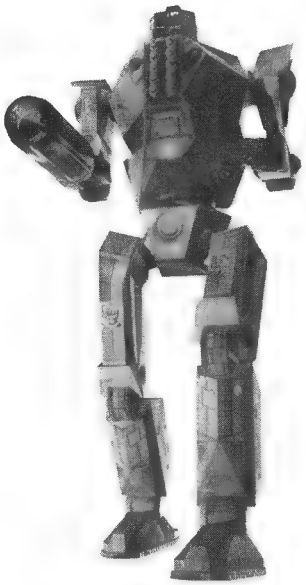
The Clint IIC is a heavy Scout 'Mech. It's a Clan version of an older Inner Sphere design, which explains its use of Clan weapons but avoidance of high-tech Endosteel internal structure or Ferro-fibrous armor. While not blazingly fast, it's got good speed for a 'Mech of its size.

The Clint IIC does utilize all 40 of its tons in the base configuration—but not particularly well. It has a great number of critical spaces (34) free, so there's no downside to switching to Clan Ferro-fibrous armor and an Endosteel internal structure. If you do this, you can crank up the Clint IIC's armor protection to the maximum allowable, and still have two tons left over. That's a great improvement when you consider that the Clint IIC is *not* as well-armored as it could be in its base configuration.

If you wish to keep the base weapon configuration, you may; it's perfectly serviceable. There's plenty of ammo for the LB-10X AC, the Clan Medium ER Lasers are fine weapons, and there's little risk of overheating. If you keep these weapons, you could just use the two extra tons to add a pair of AMS and perhaps an extra Medium Laser.

If you want to overhaul the weapon payload, you might consider missiles. The Clint isn't heavy enough to carry lots of long-range weapons, or to haul another heavy Autocannon, so you might want to use SRMs, LRMs, or the new MRMs (Medium Range Missiles) to create a missile-heavy design. Be sure to specialize in one range, as the Clint isn't big enough to carry separate weapons for every possible range.

CENTURION



'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 50/50
Internal Structure: Endosteel
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 65/97 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 0.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 8.5
Armor: 8.5
Weapons: 18.0
Ammunition: 4.0
Equipment: 1.5

TABLE 3-20. CENTURION ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium Laser (2)	1	1	Center Torso
LB-10X AC	11	6	Right Arm
LB-10X AC Ammo (20 shots)	1	1	Right Torso
LRM 10	5	2	Left Torso
LRM 10 Ammo (24 shots)	1	1	Right Torso
Artemis IV FCS	1	1	Left Torso
CASE	0.5	1	Right Torso

The Centurion is a venerable workhorse with surprisingly good speed that hasn't been fully updated with the best new technology. Despite its use of Endosteel internal structure and an XL engine, we were able to improve significantly on the design without a great deal of effort. You can, too, assuming that you've accumulated a good deal of Clan weaponry.

First, we ripped out all the weapons and switched the standard armor to Clan Ferro-fibrous. As usual, we added the most armor allowable; the standard variant didn't have enough for our taste.

Then, we replaced the LRM 10 with a Clan LRM 10, which weighs half as much. We added a second Clan LRM 10 as well, and threw in a few more tons of LRM 10 ammo. The end result was a formidable long-range punch, whereas the standard Clint had only moderate long-range power. Also, the extra LRM ammo (amounting to a grand total of 600 missiles) meant that we could fire both LRM Launchers simultaneously a total of 30 times—more than enough for most battles.

To give the Centurion a tough medium- and short-range presence, we tacked on six Clan ER Medium Lasers. Individually, they're nothing to write home about, but fire them as a cluster and you've got a serious punch.

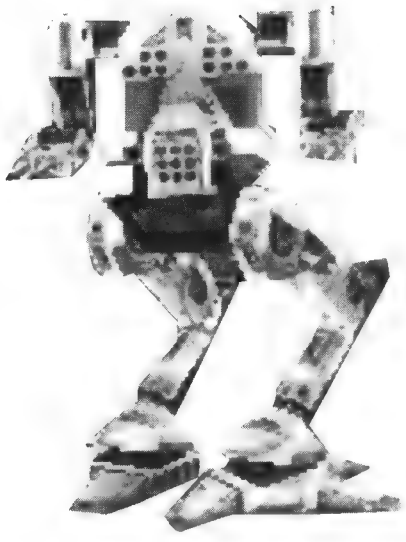
We rounded out the payload with a pair of AMS for defense, and several Clan Double Heat Sinks to help dissipate the heat caused by those lasers.

The end result is a 'Mech that's well-armored and much tougher at all ranges. The pilot will have to watch his heat more than in the base model, but the best 'Mechs use weapons that push the limits of their heat capacity—because ultimately, the added power is worth the worry.

RYOKEN

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 55/55
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-fibrous
Engine: XL (330)
Walk/Run Speed: 65/97 kph



WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 12.5
Heat Sinks: 9.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 12.5
Armor: 10.0
Weapons: 11.0
Ammunition: 0.0
Equipment: 0.0

TABLE 3-21. RYOKEN ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Medium ER Laser (Clan) (3)	1	1	Head, Left Arm, Right Arm
Large ER Laser (Clan) (2)	4	1	Left Arm, Right Arm
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (9)	1	2	Left Torso (2), Right Torso (2), Left Arm (2), Right Arm (3)

The Ryoken is an exceptionally fast 'Mech for its size, boasting the same speed as the significantly lighter Clint IIC and Centurion.

The Ryoken in its standard configuration is well equipped, though perhaps a bit long on speed and short on firepower. A 'Mech of this size isn't usually used as a scout, so you might actually consider lowering engine size until its top speed is in the 85 kph range. This is purely optional; if you think you'd use the higher speeds, go ahead and leave the engine alone. But if you tend to use more of a slugging combat style, you might consider dropping the top speed down to 83.9. This gives you an extra five tons for gear, and still leaves the Ryoken slightly faster than any big 'Mech it'll encounter.

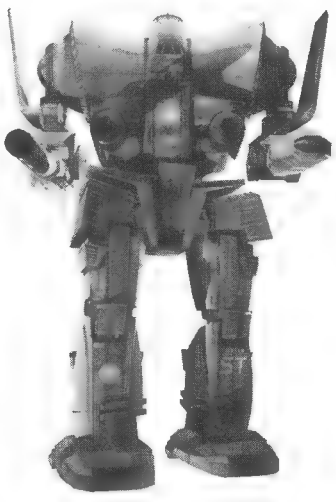
The weapon selection for the Ryoken is good. We like Large ER Lasers for their range; coupled with good speed, you can fight at a distance quite effectively with these. Also, you'll have an easy time destroying distant turrets with these weapons.

Three Medium ER Lasers aren't enough punch for us. We do, however, approve of the 'Mech's full complement of armor.

Our biggest complaint with weapon placement is that the lasers and heat sinks are packed into the 'Mech's arms. The 'Mech is easily neutralized if one or both of its arms are destroyed.

We wanted to keep the energy-weapon theme of the 'Mech intact but beef it up, so we reduced its speed to 83.9 and changed the internal structure to Endosteel. This freed up enough room to add four more Medium ER Lasers, plus two more Clan Double Heat Sinks and a pair of AMS. The result was a somewhat slower 'Mech that had good long-range abilities, but could also blast enemies to bits at close range.

AWESOME



'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 78.5/80
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (320)
Walk/Run Speed: 43/65 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 11.5
Heat Sinks: 9.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 15.0
Armor: 15.0
Weapons: 27.0
Ammunition: 1.0
Equipment: 0.0

TABLE 3-22. AWESOME ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER PPC (3)	7	3	Left Torso, Right Torso, Right Arm
Small Pulse Laser	1	1	Head
Medium Pulse Laser	2	1	Center Torso
Streak SRM 2 (2)	1.5	1	Center Torso, Left Arm
Streak SRM 2 Ammo (50 shots)	1	1	Left Leg
Double Heat Sink (9)	1	3	Left Torso (2), Right Torso (2), Left Arm (3), Right Arm (2)

The Awesome is a typical, heavy Inner Sphere 'Mech. It's slow, massive, and not nearly as effective as it would be with Clan technology. Thus, if you find yourself in possession of one of these, the first order of business is to update it and maximize its potential.

First of all, we don't necessarily recommend adjusting the 'Mech's speed. It's slow but very typical of large Inner Sphere 'Mechs; you might as well just accept the fact that speed won't be your strong point. If you do want to crank up the engine a bit, however, go ahead.

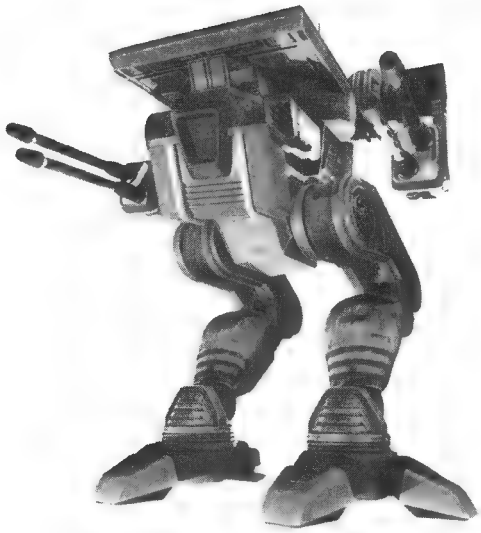
We ripped out all the weapons and switched the armor over to Clan Ferro-fibrous. We left the standard internal structure to avoid critical space problems.

Then we put back in two Clan ER PPCs (much better than the Inner Sphere variant). We also added a battery of four Clan ER Medium Lasers for close-range punch.

For a little panache, we topped it all off with a Clan Ultra AC 20 and 20 rounds of ammo. We then added our customary pair of AMS and Clan Double Heat Sinks until the 'Mech was full—we managed to fit in eight.

The end result is a 'Mech that might run a bit hotter than the original, but it still possesses blistering power at long range. More importantly, it now packs massive punch at close range, too. With only two ER PPCs, it isn't quite the same at long range, but since firing three ER PPCs simultaneously tends to result in overheating, the loss isn't that great.

MASAKARI



'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 81/85
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Ferro-fibrous
Engine: XL (340)
Walk/Run Speed: 43/65 kph

WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 13.5
Heat Sinks: 10.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 15.5
Armor: 13.5
Weapons: 26.5
Ammunition: 1.0
Equipment: 1.0

TABLE 3-23. MASAKARI ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
ER PPC (Clan) (4)	6	2	Left Arm (2), Right Arm (2)
LRM 10 (Clan)	2.5	1	Left Arm
LRM 10 Ammo	1	1	Left Arm
Double Heat Sink (Clan) (10)	1	2	Left Torso (5), Right Torso (3), Left Leg, Right Leg
CASE (Clan)	0	0	Left Arm
Targeting Computer	1	1	Right Torso

The Masakari, though a Clan BattleMech, suffers from many of the inefficiencies found in heavy Inner Sphere designs. It all starts with the fact that the base mode has four tons just lying empty.

The Masakari focuses almost exclusively on long-range punch. That's not a bad idea for a slow 'Mech that can't close in on the enemy quickly, but it's always nice to have some specialized short-range power as well.

You can throw almost any weapons you want onto a Masakari—it's that big. Here's a blueprint that keeps much of the design intact, but makes a few changes for the better.

We ripped out one of the Clan ER PPCs, because four is overkill. Firing four Clan ER PPCs simultaneously will result in automatic shutdown, regardless of how many Heat Sinks the 'Mech has; the heat spikes up into such dangerous territory, if only for a moment, that your 'Mech has to shut itself off. This is unacceptable in battle. Thus, we didn't see it as a problem to remove an ER PPC.

We also removed the Clan LRM 10. In the heat of battle, it's tricky to switch between ER PPCs and LRMs, due to their different targeting requirements—and besides, those PPCs have that range covered. The Masakari doesn't need anything else to be effective at long range.

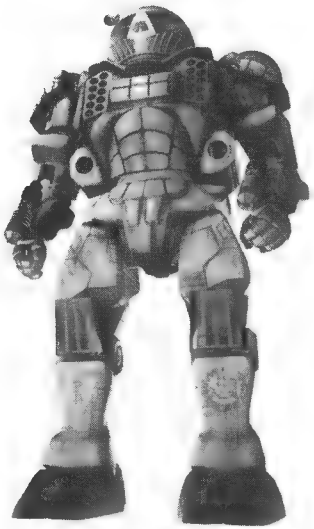
We replaced the LRM 10 and ER PPC with a battery of six Clan Medium Pulse Lasers. When fired together, these Medium Pulse Lasers give the Masakari great close-range stopping power. They run a bit hot, but the Masakari already has so many Heat Sinks (to handle the ER PPCs) that this isn't a problem.

As usual, we rounded out the payload with a pair of AMS for enhanced defense.

ATLAS

'MECH DATA

Tonnage (Used/Maximum): 99/100
Internal Structure: Standard
Armor: Standard
Engine: XL (300)
Walk/Run Speed: 32/49 kph



WEIGHT ALLOCATION (TONS)

Engine: 9.5
Heat Sinks: 10.0
Jump Jets: 0.0
Internal Structure: 16.0
Armor: 19.0
Weapons: 39.0
Ammunition: 4.0
Equipment: 1.5

TABLE 3-24. ATLAS ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

Item	Tons	Critical Spaces	Location
Large ER Laser (2)	5	2	Left Arm, Right Arm
Gauss Rifle	15	7	Right Torso
Gauss Rifle Ammo (16 shots)	1	1	Right Arm
LRM 20	10	5	Left Torso
LRM 20 Ammo (12 shots)	1	1	Left Torso
Medium Pulse Laser (2)	2	1	Center Torso
Heat Sink (10)	1	1	Head, Left Torso, Right Torso (2), Left Arm, Right Arm, Left Leg (2), Right Leg (2)
AMS	0.5	1	Left Arm
CASE (2)	0.5	1	Right Arm, Left Torso

The Atlas is a lumbering monster. It'll never be a speed demon, no matter what you do with the engine, but its ability to serve as a mobile weapon platform more than compensates for its shortcomings. Still, you'll want to leave the Atlas behind on missions that demand raw speed.

The Atlas in its base configuration is hampered by its use of Inner Sphere weapons. It uses standard internal structure and armor, but that's fine. On a 'Mech of this size, Ferro-fibrous armor or an Endosteel internal structure would eat up far too many critical spaces.

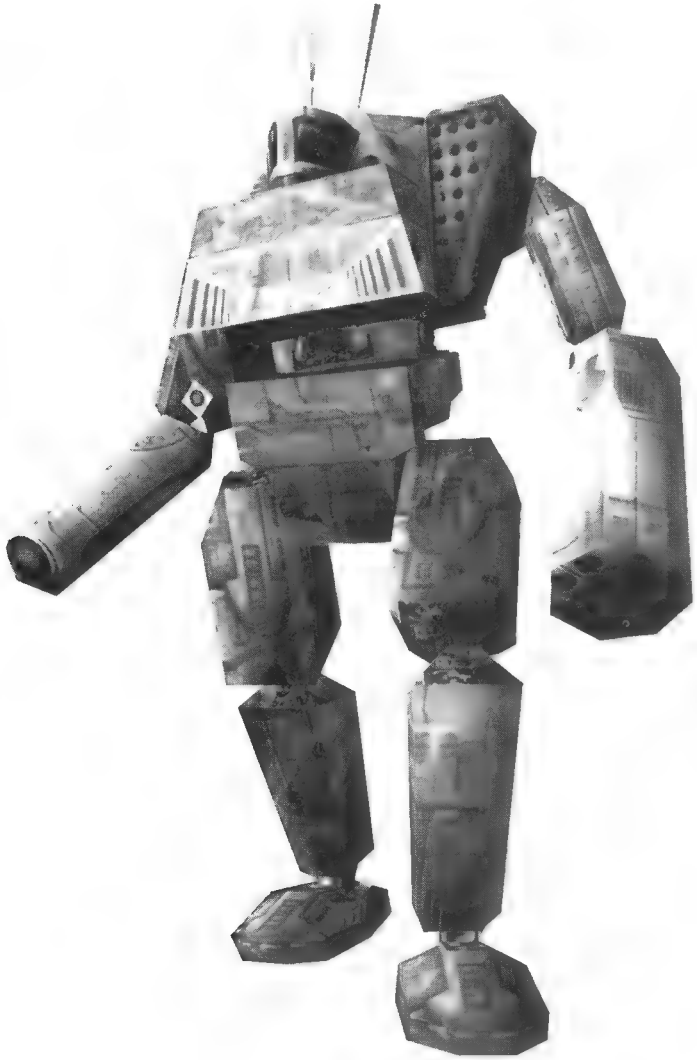
As with other 'Mechs of this size, you can implement a wide variety of weapon configurations. There's so much room that just about anything will work. Here's one possible configuration that you can try:

Rip out all the weapons and gear, then add the following weapons and ammo: two Clan LRM 20s, six units of LRM 20 ammo, one MRM 40, five units of MRM 40 ammo, one Clan Streak SRM 6, and two units of Streak SRM 6 ammo. Also add six Clan Double Heat Sinks and three Clan AMS. Put a Clan CASE in every spot where there's ammunition; it won't take up any space or weight.

Adding these items will completely use up the Atlas' critical spaces, so you may have to juggle the pieces around to fit them all in. When all the gear is in place, there'll be about 10 free tons, so crank up the engine size as far as it'll go. The Atlas should not be completely full, and its top speed should now be almost 60 kph.

Now you've got a 'Mech that's still slow but considerably faster than the base model. It has devastating long- and medium-range punch thanks to the LRMs and MRM; not many foes can absorb 40 missiles at a time and still remain standing. At short range, the MRMs can still be used, plus the accurate Streak SRM 6s allow the Atlas to pick off small, pesky targets that would otherwise be difficult to aim at.

The only major downside to this 'Mech configuration is its dependence on ammo, but we've done our best to ensure that there's enough ammo to get you through the vast majority of battles. Occasional trips to the MFBs should ensure a constant supply of ammo.



CHAPTER 4
COMBAT

AT THE HEART OF ANY MISSION is combat. Everything you've done up until the moment of combat is merely preparation. This is not to say that preparation is inconsequential—far from it. Your review of the mission briefing, your 'Mech customization, and your overall strategy for attacking the enemy all play major roles in your ability to succeed. But it's all for nothing if you can't succeed in combat.

There are certain things this chapter can't help you with. It can't make your aim steadier, for instance, and it can't help you master the intricacies of piloting a 'Mech in an intense fight. Only experience can solve those problems. What this chapter can do, however, is point out which skills and strategies tend to work best, and provide suggestions on how to improve those strategies. Read on for more.

TRUISMS OF 'MECH COMBAT

Any number of facts become evident to a seasoned MechWarrior—like the fact that Autocannons are harder to aim than lasers, and that Pulse Lasers are easier to aim than other lasers. But those are simply details; the following general statements pertain instead to the big picture. They're important enough that you should read them carefully—maybe even read them twice!

CONTROL CONFIGURATION IS ESSENTIAL

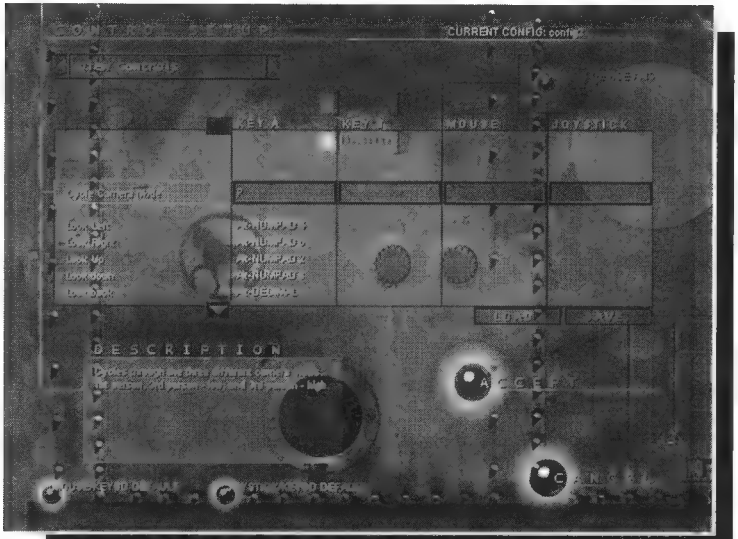


Figure 4-1. Take time to adjust your controls.

Take the time to adjust your control set-up. Ideally, your set-up should allow you to handle most essential combat functions without looking at the keyboard.

That's not to say that *all* potential commands must be easy to access. Keys that trigger less common functions, like crouching or turning your AMS on and off, don't need to be reassigned. But basic combat functions like turning your 'Mech, changing weapon groups, zooming the target reticule, firing weapons, and so forth *must* be easy to find.

TIP

Use a mouse or joystick in addition to the keyboard, and switch to the torso mode that moves your entire torso along with your targeting reticule. This way you can naturally swivel your 'Mech's torso as you aim, without having to use separate keys or commands to access your full range of motion.

COMBAT STARTS LONG AND ENDS SHORT

Figure 4-2. Combat typically begins at long range, but quickly closes to medium or short range.

As a general rule, combat begins at long range and gradually closes to short range. This occurs naturally as you move through enemy territory. As you first move into an area, enemies are at long range. If you have a direct line of sight with the enemy, long-range weapons fire will be exchanged.

Quickly, however, the fight tends to close to medium or short range. Partially, this is because both parties will tend to stay in motion to avoid getting hit, yet will want to keep the opponent in their forward field of view as they move—so they find themselves moving ever closer as they follow their chosen angle of attack. Also, because most 'Mechs are geared toward fighting at medium range, most enemies try to enter this range so the majority of their weapons can be brought to bear.

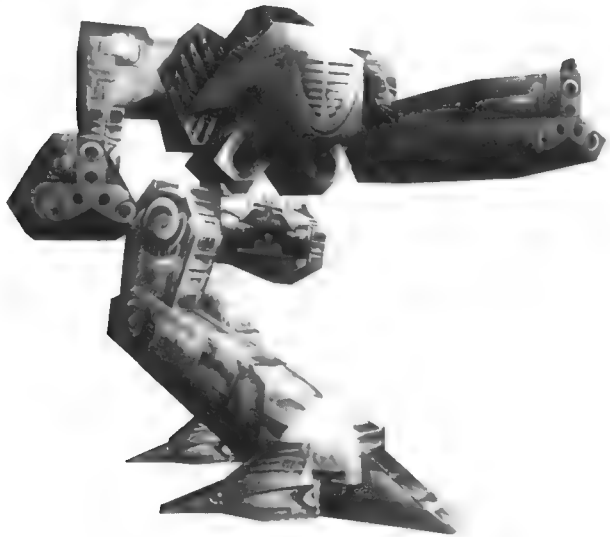
Understanding this rule helps you to understand why it's difficult to succeed with 'Mechs geared solely toward long-range or short-range combat. BattleMechs with only long-range weapons, for example, will do well in the early stages of the fight but will suffer if their target manages to get close.

Conversely, 'Mechs with only heavy-hitting short-range weapons will suffer in the early stages of combat, when they have no response to the enemy's long-range barrages.

TIP

It's possible to use terrain features to block enemies' view of your 'Mech during the early stages of combat, then pop out of cover when the enemy is close. If you can make this work, you can succeed with a 'Mech armed with only short-range weapons.

This technique can work in multiplayer games, where you can hide behind cover all you want. But it's harder to live by this technique in the single-player campaign. That's because you can't just hide behind a rock in a campaign mission; you have to explore and achieve multiple goals. That tends to force you out into the open, where enemies with long-range weapons can pick you apart.



TIP

Running away to maintain long range in combat is a difficult proposal, as it requires your 'Mech to be faster than that of the enemy. It also gives enemy 'Mechs an opportunity to pick away at your thin rear torso armor. It's difficult enough to hit a moving target without also worrying about the distance at which you're fighting.

Finally, running away forces you to either forego the opportunity to return fire, or to run while looking back at your target, which increases the possibility that you'll get snagged on an unseen terrain feature.

This is not to say that it's physically impossible to maintain long range throughout an entire fight—but it's difficult, so you probably don't want to make it your bread-and-butter tactic.

MOVEMENT IS CRUCIAL

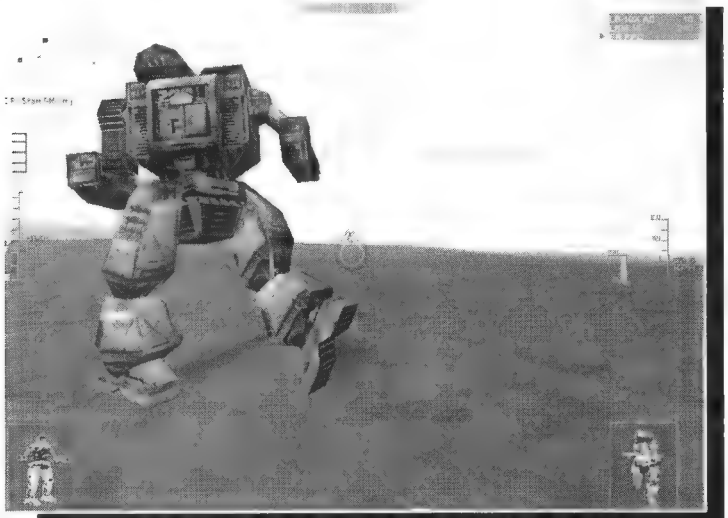


Figure 4-3. Moving 'Mechs are significantly harder to hit.

A golden rule in combat is to always keep moving—and quickly. Stationary targets are easy to hit, so you won't last long if you stand still or constantly move at a snail's pace.

This rule will become clear when your 'Mech enters areas with heavy concentrations of enemy forces. Standing still will usually get your 'Mech knocked down or destroyed within moments. You'll live longer if you keep moving.

You'll find more tips on movement later in this chapter.

BIGGER 'MECHS ARE BIGGER TARGETS

Figure 4-4. It's easier to aim at big 'Mechs than small 'Mechs, due to their larger size and lower top speeds.

Larger 'Mechs are undeniably more dangerous than smaller ones, both because of their massive weapon payloads and their tough armor. However, you'll find that there are certain tradeoffs when you take a big 'Mech. Larger 'Mechs tend to be slower than small 'Mechs, mainly because as a 'Mech grows in size it requires a larger (and thus, less efficient) engine to generate high speeds. It's physically possible to make a 100-ton 'Mech relatively fast, but the cost in tonnage leaves little room for weapons and equipment.

While a super-fast Owens' armor is extremely weak and vulnerable, actually hitting the Owens (which has a top speed near 130 kph) can be a tricky proposition. Hitting a heavily armored 100-ton Daishi, on the other hand (with its top speed of approximately 48 kph) is usually not difficult.

Also, big 'Mechs are simply big targets; this fact shouldn't be discounted. A 30- or 35-ton 'Mech like an Owens is physically small compared to a 100-tonner. It's sometimes hard to hit any part of an Owens, never mind targeting specific body parts. When fighting a Daishi, on the other hand, it's usually an easy matter to attack a specific arm or leg because it's physically big and thick.

Nevertheless, realize that you're vulnerable no matter what sort of 'Mech you're piloting. Investing in slightly larger engines for your large BattleMechs can sometimes pay off, and prevent you from getting shot up too thoroughly.

EQUIP FEW AND SIMPLE WEAPON GROUPS

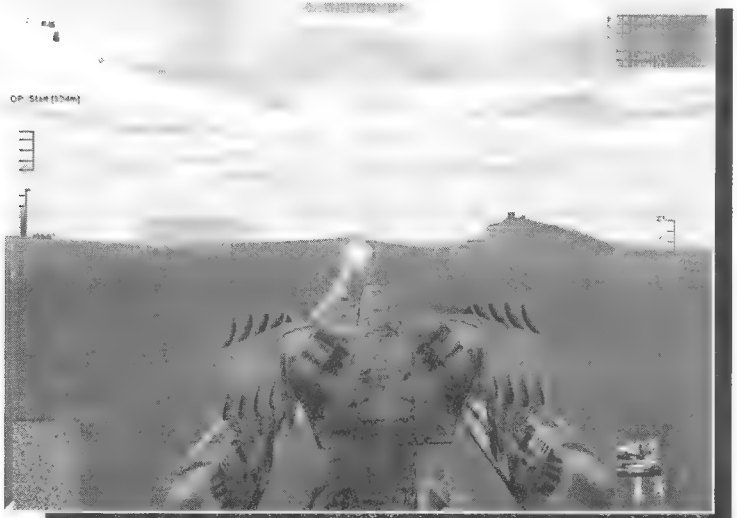


Figure 4-5. Having only two or three weapons groups simplifies combat.

You should usually group your weapons into a few large clusters instead of several smaller ones. Combat is difficult enough as it is without fumbling through multiple groups of similar weapons; you want to make it easier by having only a few weapon groups to choose from.

Also, your weapon groups should consist of homogenous (similar) weapons. We've already covered this point in Chapter 4, but it bears repeating. A weapon group containing both lasers and Autocannons, for example, usually won't work. In this case, you have to lead the target with the Autocannons, but you don't have to lead with the lasers, so regardless of where you aim you're bound to miss with one weapon or the other (assuming that you use group fire).

We suggest that you reduce your weapon groups to three, or perhaps even two. To do this, first load your 'Mech with homogenous weapons, so that grouping isn't a problem. Then, sort the weapons by range. For example, your 'Mech might have three LRM 5s in one group and six Medium Pulse Lasers in a second. The LRMs would be used for picking off long-range targets and for harassing enemies at the start of a fight. Then, as the fight moves to closer range, it's a simple matter to switch to the Pulse Lasers.

If you want more variety than two or three weapons groups can provide, go ahead and make more. It can often be useful to have a separate group for special weapons, like an Autocannon 20 that you'll only use against the very toughest foes. However, try to keep weapon groups few and simple until you're fairly experienced.

TARGETING INDIVIDUAL AREAS IS NECESSARY

Figure 4-6. Target individual body parts on enemy 'Mechs; legs are the recommended target.

BattleMechs have several distinct body parts, and each part has its own armor. The least efficient way to kill a 'Mech is to scatter weapon fire all across its body, damaging armor first in one spot and then in another. If you do this, it'll take forever to puncture the armor deeply enough to do any real damage to the 'Mech's internal components.

The most efficient way to kill a 'Mech, conversely, is to pick a part of its body and concentrate your fire exclusively on it. This way you'll peel off the armor from this area quickly, and every subsequent shot will deal significant damage to internal components in that area.

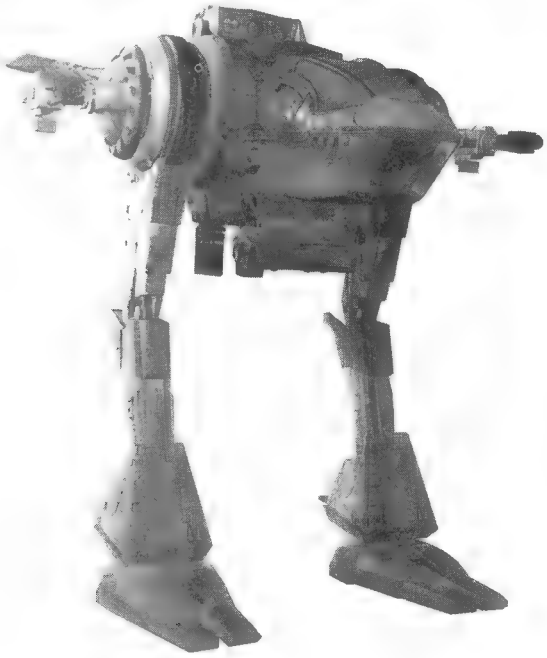
The only drawback of targeting a particular body part is that it's more difficult to aim at part of a 'Mech than an entire 'Mech. Nonetheless, you shouldn't let this fact deter you. Practice shooting at individual body parts, and remember to use the numeric keypad to force even your missiles to concentrate on the chosen body part (see your manual for details).

Target legs almost exclusively. Arms are relatively fragile and they often contain weapons, but if they're destroyed, the rest of the 'Mech remains intact. Legs, on the other hand, are fairly easy to hit. They're not as well-armored as the torso, and still vital: if either leg is taken out, the 'Mech is instantly out of commission.

The only time you might want to forget this rule is when you're piloting a heavy-hitting 'Mech and your enemy is a small, fast 'Mech like a Firefly or Owens. In this case your weapons are strong enough to do significant damage regardless of where you hit the enemy, and the enemy is so small and quick that hitting the legs is very difficult. Furthermore, after the first few campaign missions, salvaging a Firefly or Owens won't be a primary concern; you'll want to concentrate on salvaging bigger 'Mechs. In this case, feel free to go for the body. If you can score a knockdown, you can usually end the fight with another fast weapon volley.

TIP

Leg targeting is also good for salvage purposes. By taking out legs, which don't contain critical components like the engine or cockpit, you increase the chances that the downed 'Mech will be salvageable. Also, because weapons are never placed on a 'Mech's legs, you're more likely to leave the 'Mech's individual weapons intact.



TIP

The middle part of a 'Mech's leg is usually the skinniest. The biggest and easiest-to-hit pieces are usually the feet and the upper thighs, near where the legs connect to the torso. Aim for either of these spots when attempting to shoot a leg off a 'Mech.

KNOCKOUT PUNCHES ARE PREFERABLE TO JABS

Figure 4-7. Group-firing your weapons, like this cluster of lasers, is usually more effective than single-firing or chain-firing them.

As explained in the last section, it's best to concentrate your fire on one piece of a 'Mech's body, so you can penetrate the armor in that area and damage internal components quickly. It's just as important to concentrate your attack's power. You want to hit hard and fast, disabling opponents before they have time to hurt you in return.

The fastest way to do this is to inflict massive damage on one spot in an instant. This involves using either massive weapons such as Autocannon 20s, or using multiple weapons simultaneously, with group fire. Often, group-fired weapons prove to be a better alternative than individual, massive weapons. They tend to be less ammo-intensive, lighter, and/or possess better range than heavy hitters like Autocannon 20s.

We'd go so far as to say that single-fire mode and chain-fire mode are inappropriate for most battles. Picking away at your target one laser at a time won't kill it quickly; it'll have lots of time to respond to your attacks. Instead, use group-fire mode to blast the enemy with multiple weapons simultaneously! This greatly increases your chances of a knockdown or a kill, and practically guarantees that your weapons will all hit the same part of the enemy 'Mech's body.

TIP

If you do manage to knock the enemy down, continue firing at the body location you've chosen to target. A 'Mech that's lying on the ground or in the process of getting up is as vulnerable as it'll ever be, and you need to get in easy shots whenever you have the opportunity.

LANCEMATES SHOULD BE DIRECTED

Figure 4-8. Give your lancemates orders, either with the Command screen or with the "quick command" trick explained here.

This is marginally useful, especially if your lancemates are good shots, but if you never issue direct commands, you'll always take the full brunt of enemy attacks.

It's important to occasionally command your lancemates to take direct action. The most common and useful order is "Attack My Target" (F6). This allows you to give the lancemate a target other than the one you're currently attacking, which is good for avoiding redundancy. Also, just as important (if not more), your lancemate will charge ahead to attack the target and thus draw some of the weapon fire that would otherwise be directed at you.

This isn't to suggest that you should always make your lancemates charge ahead of you—but you should be aware that they'll almost never draw enemy fire if you don't give them attack commands. In a worst-case scenario, where you fail to give your lancemates orders, your 'Mech will be destroyed and the mission will end, while your lancemates' 'Mechs remain clean and spotless, never having been touched.

If left undirected, your lancemates will shadow your movements, staying slightly behind you and off to one side. They fire at your enemies, particularly the enemy that you have currently targeted.

TIP

If your lancemate's 'Mech is destroyed, you've permanently lost that 'Mech—but the mission continues. If your own 'Mech is lost, the mission is an automatic failure.

If you have a choice, therefore, you always want your lancemate's 'Mech to be destroyed instead of yours. You may later decide to replay the mission because the lancemates' lost 'Mech was vital, but at least it's up to you to make the choice. If your own 'Mech is destroyed, you don't have any option but to replay the mission.

Command your lancemates frequently, therefore, and let them draw some of the enemy's fire. This becomes more important as you face more and more difficult missions, where your 'Mech will be destroyed if you allow it to draw all the enemy's fire.

TIP

The Command screen (usually accessed with F11) is a good way to command multiple lancemates, especially when you're not taking direct fire. But when you need to order lancemates quickly, here's an alternative:

Target a lancemate with one of the "Target Ally" keys (typically, W). Then target one of your enemies. You'll notice that the name of the last ally you targeted remains above the target display in the lower-left corner of your cockpit.

Figure 4-9. Note that Dominic Paine's name remains in the lower left corner of the cockpit, even though an enemy is currently targeted. Pressing F6 or another command button will now directly command Dominic's 'Mech.

Now proceed with the mission. If a truly nasty situation like an ambush arises, and you don't have time to switch to the Command screen, simply target an enemy and press F6. This issues an "Attack Target" command to the lancemate whose name remains on your screen.

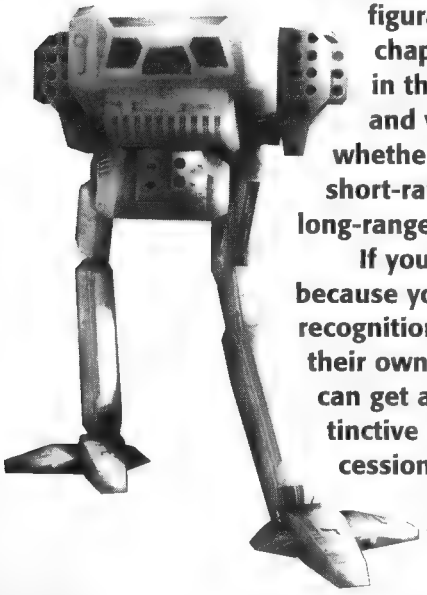
The important part of this process is to target your lancemate *before* entering a dangerous situation. That way, you only have to press a single key (F6) to issue the attack order while you're busy fighting.

YOU SHOULD KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Figure 4-10. An enemy like this, with its potent close-range Autocannons, should be fought at long range if possible.

When you're fighting opponents without any particular strengths or weaknesses, concentrate on your own tactics. But when you fight opponents with particularly distinctive configurations, such as a 'Mech with twin Autocannon 20s or a pair of LRM 20 Racks, then you should definitely alter your tactics.

The first step is to read Chapter 3, which describes the default configuration of every 'Mech and vehicle in the game. The 'Mechs you encounter in campaign missions are likely to be based on these default configurations, and the vehicles never change—so by reading this chapter you can get a strong sense of what you'll be facing in the campaign. Then, when you encounter these 'Mechs and vehicles in combat, you'll know just from the name whether to stay back (as when fighting enemies geared toward short-range combat) or to charge in (against enemies geared for long-range combat).



If you aren't sure what variant of 'Mech you're facing, either because you've forgotten or because it's been customized beyond recognition, then all you can do is pay attention. Weapons all have their own distinctive look, so after a few shots are exchanged you can get a strong sense of what you're up against. Lasers fire distinctive rays; Pulse Lasers shoot those same rays in rapid succession; Autocannon fire is distinguished by the muzzle flash. Learn to recognize your enemy's weapons, and adjust your distance and tactics accordingly.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS 101

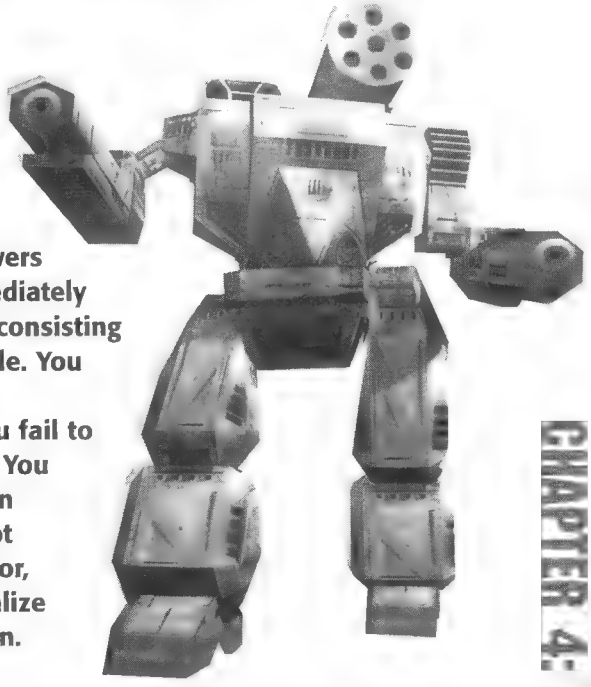
Situational awareness is key to success. It's your ability to understand what's going on around you. It's your grasp of what's happening on the entire battlefield, and your understanding of the likely outcomes associated with particular tactics.

As a beginning MechWarrior who's just learning to control your BattleMech, your situational awareness will probably be poor. You'll be so concerned with simple actions—like moving your 'Mech in the right direction, selecting the right set of weapons, or figuring out the radar—that the world around you will be a blur. Later, as you gain experience, your situational awareness will naturally improve.

WHY YOU NEED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Imagine that you're approaching the entrance to a canyon. Because you paid attention to your mission briefing, you know that just inside the canyon's entrance is a pirate base fortified with several Laser Turrets and an unknown number of 'Mechs.

You equip your LRMs and slowly advance on the mouth of the canyon. By moving slowly, you hope to reveal the enemy turrets one at a time, and pick them off at long range where they can't return fire.



Suddenly, just as the turrets are about to come into view, a previously unseen Orion powers up nearby. It's within medium range. You immediately switch to your medium-range weapons group, consisting mainly of Pulse Lasers, and crank up the throttle. You start to circle the Orion, firing all the while.

In your haste to kill the Orion, however, you fail to pay attention to where you're actually headed. You accidentally wander into full view of the canyon mouth, where all the turrets that you just forgot about can see you. The lasers pepper your armor, and only after taking heavy damage do you realize that it's the turrets shredding you, not the Orion.

You back away from the canyon, but by this time a Vulture hiding inside the canyon has spotted you and powered up. With help from the Orion, it guns you down.

This situation illustrates both the most common reason why MechWarriors lose their situational awareness, and why it's so essential. Situational awareness is typically lost during combat, when it's easy to get too focused on a single enemy and lose sight of the rest of the battlefield. This is particularly true when combat starts unexpectedly, as when a new foe powers up or moves into the area.

The value of situational awareness is that it helps you to avoid disadvantageous situations, particularly those that pit you against multiple enemies at once.

USING YOUR RADAR

Figure 4-11. Use the radar to scan for new enemies and potential trouble spots.

TIP

Leave your radar in Active mode in campaign missions, as this mode gives you the truest sense of what's going on. You may want to experiment with Passive mode in multiplayer games, where hiding can be a useful tactic.

The first key to situational awareness is to make good use of your radar. Press the R key to make the radar expand to fill your entire screen. At first this may confuse you a bit, as you may mistake enemies on the radar for enemies in your field of view. But the larger radar view helps you to monitor your surroundings during combat, without really looking away from your target.

Train yourself to glance at your radar constantly, making note of changing enemy locations and new radar contacts as they appear. Occasionally flip between radar mode and map mode, which gives you a truer sense of where enemies are in relation to you.

MAINTAINING VISUAL AWARENESS

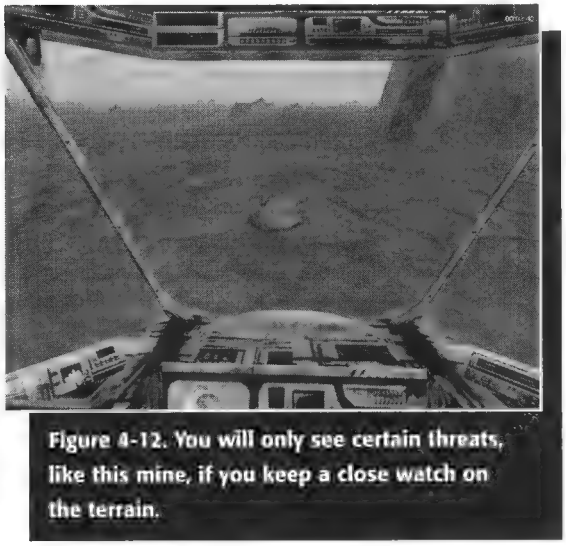
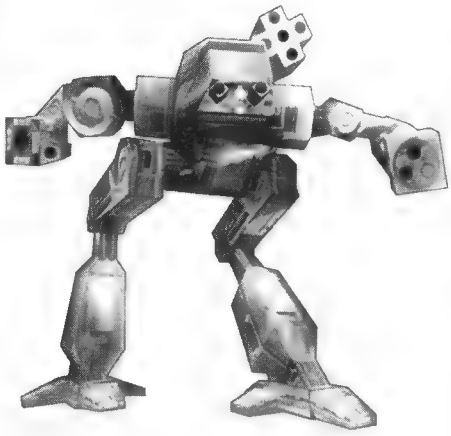


Figure 4-12. You will only see certain threats, like this mine, if you keep a close watch on the terrain.



Make use of visual awareness. The radar displays most threats, but visual awareness still plays several key roles:

- Mines, which are occasionally scattered around the battlefield, don't show up on radar. You'll need to watch out for them.
- Large structures and terrain features often hide powered-down foes. Make a note of these structures visually, and prepare for trouble when approaching them.
- Visual awareness helps keep you out of danger spots. In the "canyon" example provided under Why You Need Situational Awareness, you could have avoided the mouth of the canyon by noting it visually and then reversing your direction whenever you got dangerously close to it.
- When fighting in terrain that's filled with obstacles, target enemies that have you in their direct line of sight first. These are the threats that can kill you first. However, only by scanning the area visually can you tell which enemies can see you, and which are hidden by obstacles.

STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE

As stated previously, the main point of situational awareness is to keep you out of trouble.

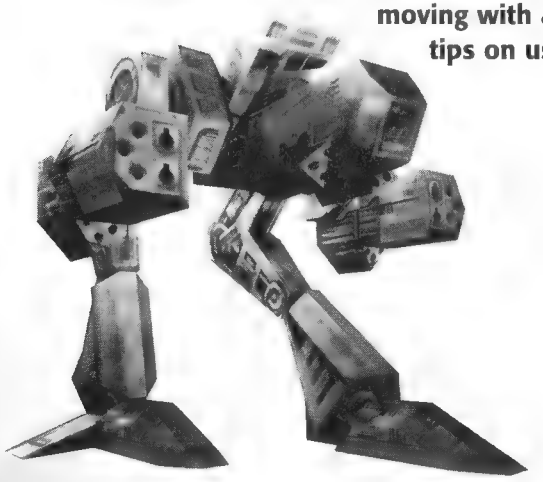
In an ideal situation you would face each enemy individually for a one-on-one confrontation, then move on to the next foe only after the current threat was neutralized. This ideal situation would allow you to focus your efforts completely on one foe at a time. Plus, because you should be able to incapacitate any single foe in a relatively short amount of time, this situation would allow you to avoid lots of return fire.

The reality is that you'll often face several foes simultaneously, but you should still make every possible effort to avoid taking on extra enemies at once. Situational awareness allows you to fight in a fairly large area *without* entering unexplored territory. New territory is dangerous because powered-down enemies may be hidden there, and entering the area may trigger them. So you should try to stick to previously covered ground when fighting, using your situational awareness to keep from wandering into particularly deadly spots.

MOVEMENT

Movement is key to survival. Standing still is a sure-fire recipe for failure, as it ensures that even enemies with poor aim will hit you with their shots.

While simply keeping in motion is preferable to standing still, moving with a sense of purpose is even better. Here are some tips on using movement to your advantage.



LATERAL MOVEMENT

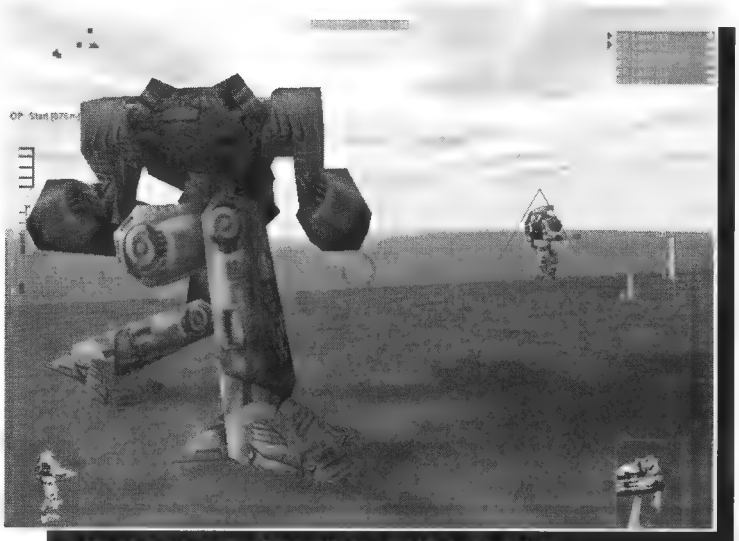


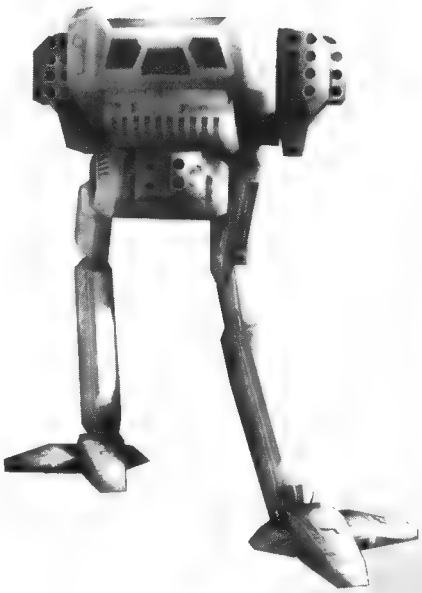
Figure 4-13. Move laterally to evade enemy fire.

Moving directly toward or away from your enemy isn't that helpful. Moving in these directions causes you to stay in the enemy's crosshairs. Moving to the left or right in relation to the enemy, on the other hand, is very useful. The enemy must then continually move his crosshairs to maintain his aim, and this continual movement can lead to missed shots. Lateral movement is key to a technique called the circle fight, which we'll explore in detail later in this chapter.

MAINTAINING RANGE

Another trick is to use movement to maintain a particular range. If you have potent long-range weapons and you want to use them, put the throttle in full reverse and walk backward while firing at the target. The enemy will still close the gap, but more slowly than if you were moving toward him.

Conversely, if you have short-range weapons, you should approach at full throttle and try to close the gap as quickly as possible.



JUMPING

Figure 1-14. With Relaxed Jump Jets enabled, you can use your jets to side step incoming fire.

The "classic" reason to have jump jets is to surmount large terrain obstacles and travel across the landscape quickly. It's even possible to jump onto an enemy and inflict damage, though this tactic isn't recommended for serious battles. But the value of jump jets for maneuvering in combat—for dodging incoming fire—depends on the game settings.

If you have not enabled Relaxed Jump Jets from the Options menu, then your only option with jump jets is to jump up. If this is the case, you probably won't be using jets too much in combat. You can jump vertically to dodge fire, but you'll have trouble aiming while airborne. You also can jump to get behind terrain features or behind your foes.

If you have enabled Relaxed Jump Jets, you also can press additional keys to jump laterally. This is useful for dodging incoming fire, and can be extremely effective.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

You must manage a number of resources throughout the course of a mission. These include resources belonging to your 'Mech, and also resources external to it (such as MFBs and lancemates). Here's a look at the most critical resources, and tips on how to utilize them.

MANAGING WEAPONS AND HEAT

Figure 4-15. This 'Mech is in the danger zone. It's time to stop firing its weapon systems and let it cool off.

MechWarriors fight a constant battle with heat. The battle becomes most intense during the toughest combats, when you're pushing your weapon systems to the limit by firing them nonstop for a prolonged period of time.

Here are some general rules for keeping heat in check:

- If your 'Mech is well designed, a group-fired burst from your main weapon group might spike heat into the danger zone—but the heat should be largely dissipated by the time that weapon group is ready to fire again. If it isn't, you should consider removing one or more weapons from the group and replacing them with heat sinks.
- If your 'Mech has a decent number of heat sinks, you should usually be able to manually override a shutdown (with the ⓞ key) and not suffer any adverse consequences. But this is only *if* you stop firing your weapons until temperatures return to normal.
- You generally *should* override a shutdown whenever possible. Shutdowns leave you extremely vulnerable, and usually result in the enemy destroying your 'Mech. After overriding the shutdown, take evasive action until temperatures cool back down to acceptable levels. Resist the temptation to fire!
- Coolant flushes should only be used in extreme situations. If you find yourself constantly wishing you had more of them available, your 'Mech isn't designed properly. Replace some of its high-heat weapons with heat sinks, or with low-heat weapons.

- Moving around generates some heat, but not much. It's generally not necessary to slow down or stop moving because of heat concerns.
- Submerging your 'Mech in water helps dissipate heat, but as with coolant flushes, you'll know your 'Mech needs more heat sinks if you find yourself constantly longing for some water to stand in.

USING MFBS

Figure 4-16. MFBs are crucial to success. Use their repair abilities in the fullest.

A trio of MFBs accompanies you through the single-player campaign. They're key to your success, so if one of them ever gets destroyed, immediately start the mission over.

MFBs repair and resupply your 'Mech during missions. They also hold salvaged 'Mechs, weapons, and equipment. Losing an MFB in a campaign mission means the loss of everything stored in it, and this loss is unacceptable.

You can order your MFBs to proceed to a given location during the mission, and to repair you or your lancemates there. MFBs are, however, vulnerable to enemy attack. Never order them to a location that you haven't thoroughly explored and cleared of enemy presence.

TIP

The safe bet with MFBs is usually to leave them behind, ordering them to your current position only after exhaustively scouring the area.

TIP

In pirate missions, you don't need to worry if an MFB is destroyed. You'll always have three new MFBs for the next mission.

You can use the MFBs' repair abilities an unlimited number of times, though your finite supply of gear will sometimes limit how much they can help. For example, if your 'Mech is wearing Clan Ferro-fibrous armor, and it gets four tons of armor shot off in combat, the MFBs can't fully repair it if there are only three tons in storage. Similarly, if your LRM 20 is out of ammo, the MFBs can't replace it if they have none left. Thus, it's crucial to make sure you have spare armor and ammo before choosing a particular armor type or weapon for your 'Mech.

Making frequent use of MFBs can make seemingly impossible missions much easier. Don't be afraid to return to the MFBs after sustaining only minor damage. Continual trips back to the MFBs take time, and they can wear on your patience, but they're crucial when you're facing a particularly difficult mission.

DIRECTING LANCEMATES

Figure 4-17. Your lancemate is engaging the enemy, and taking some of the pressure off of your 'Mech.

As stated under "Truisms of 'Mech Combat" (earlier in this chapter), it's important to give your lancemates specific orders. If left to their own devices, they'll lend fire support, but they don't always fire at the target you want them to engage. Also, if they shoot at the same enemy 'Mech that you're shooting, they usually won't shoot the specific body part that you're targeting, so their contributions are often meaningless.

Furthermore, a good deal of a lancemate's value lies in his or her ability to draw fire away from your 'Mech. If the enemy is allowed to concentrate fully on your 'Mech, you'll have a rough time surviving campaign missions. By assigning your lancemates specific targets and letting them run off to engage the enemy,

you increase the chances that they'll draw some of the fire that would otherwise all be directed at you.

Here's a review of the commands you can issue:

- *Attack Target* causes the lancemate to attack your selected target. This is the command you'll use most frequently. Assign your lancemates to powerful enemies to get the most benefit from their distraction abilities.
- *Defend Target* causes the lancemate to engage enemies that fire on the target, or that get too close to the target. This is an infrequently used command that's nonetheless very handy in missions where the goal is to defend something.
- *Follow Me* orders the lancemate to follow you. Because this is what the lancemate automatically does anyway (unless given a contradictory order), you only need to issue this command when you want the lancemate to break off its current task of attacking, defending, or getting itself repaired.
- *Refit* orders the lancemate to be repaired by MFBs. Be sure to order the MFBs into position before issuing this order; listen for their announcement that they're ready to deploy.

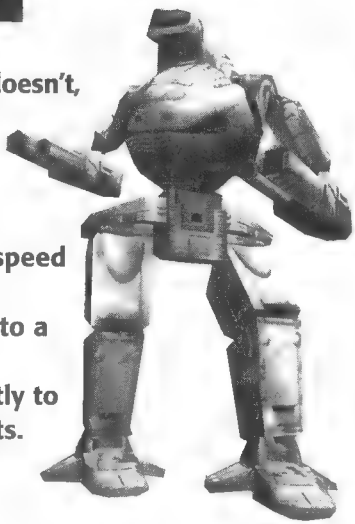
TACTICS

As you gain experience on the battlefield, you'll develop your own unique style of combat. No matter how experienced you become, however, you'll find that certain basic tactics are always effective. Here's a look at these tactics, complete with notes on when you should try to use them.

LONG-RANGE GUNNERY

Figure 4-18. Gunning down SRM turrets from afar is always a good policy.

The most basic tactic we'll review here is to shoot at targets from afar. This tactic is applicable when you're in terrain that allows you to see long distances, and there's nowhere to hide. It works best when you're firing at immobile targets like turrets, or enemies that are reluctant to leave a certain area.



If you've got long-range weapons and the enemy doesn't, you can simply park your 'Mech at a safe distance and fire away. Even if the enemy does have long-range weapons, you'll come out ahead if you have more or better long-range weapons.

If the enemy chases you, walk backward at full speed to maximize the time spent at long range. When the enemy finally enters medium or close range, switch to a circle fight (detailed later).

You'll find yourself using this technique frequently to destroy turrets, and in the early stages of many fights.

WAIT AND BAIT

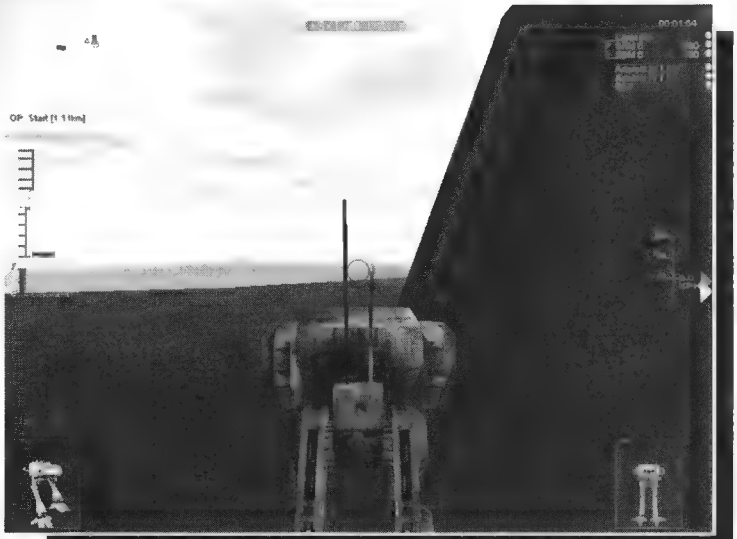


Figure 4-19. When the enemy appears from behind the rock, you're ready to let him have it.

Often you'll find yourself near a key enemy base or fortified area, with several enemies already visible and others likely to be concentrated nearby, powered-down for the moment but ready to spring to life. Walking into such a mess is about the worst thing you can do. What's your alternative?

A good tactic in this situation is to hide behind a major terrain feature such as a large building or a hillside. Make sure the feature you're using for cover is positioned directly between you and the enemy concentration. If you're lucky, some of your enemies will approach you or move around enough that you can see them around the obstacle. Pick off these enemies with concentrated fire as they approach.

Depending on your 'Mech's weapon payload you can either stand close to the object you're using for cover, or stand well back from it. If your 'Mech has potent close-range punch you should snug up to the object. This way you can blast enemies at point-blank range the instant they appear around the object. If your 'Mech is more geared toward long-range fighting, stand well back from the object so that long-range weapons can be used when an enemy strides into view.

TIP

The point of the Wait and Bait technique is to force your enemies to approach you individually. If you charge into their midst you'll be attacked by several foes at once, but if you make them come to you, while standing in a place where the bulk of them can't aim at you, you can pick them off individually when they come around the obstacle.

THE MISSILE DASH

Figure 4-20. Proceed just far enough out of cover to unleash your missiles.

The Missile Dash is a hit-and-run technique than can be used with any medium-range or long-range weapons, despite the name. This tactic answers the question: "What if I try the Wait and Bait, but the enemy refuses to chase me behind my obstacle?" This is a legitimate concern. While enemies in campaign missions will typically chase you, sometimes they'll hold their ground. This is also true in multiplayer games, where you can never predict the enemy's behavior with certainty. What should you do now?

You still don't want to go charging off into the unknown, abandoning your safe spot and entering an area with who-knows-how-many foes lurking around. Here's a solution.

Target an enemy from safety, behind your obstacle. Then dash out into the open for a moment or two, meanwhile acquiring a missile lock (assuming that you have missiles) or drawing a bead with other medium- to long-range weapons. The instant you get the enemy in your sights (or get your lock), group-fire all appropriate weapons and hit the Reverse Throttle key (Backspace) to retreat into cover. If you're fast, you can fire your weapons or get your missiles in flight, then hide again before the enemy has much time to react. It's possible you'll be hit by weapons like ER Lasers, Gauss Rifles, or PPCs, but that's a tough long-range shot for your enemies. You can usually bet on your missiles hitting their mark, and you won't be scratched in the process.

A key to this technique is to only move as far out of cover as necessary to get a clear shot—and not an inch farther. That way you'll disappear back into cover almost immediately when you reverse the throttle, and minimize your time out in the open.

LURE AND RETREAT

Sometimes you have no choice but to enter enemy territory. Maybe there isn't any handy cover to hide behind; maybe your enemies are unseen, even though you have a strong hunch they're around; maybe the enemy is himself under cover, and won't come out, so that it's impossible to snipe from long range or wait for him to come to you. In these cases you should use the technique of Lure and Retreat.

Lure and Retreat simply involves proceeding into enemy territory until the enemy starts to come after you. At this point you should retreat somewhat and fight in territory you've already explored. This minimizes the risk that you'll uncover still more enemies as you fight.

For example, let's say your target is an enemy base filled with several tall, virtually indestructible buildings. There's no handy cover nearby. You're pretty sure that there's a horde of enemies hidden amongst those buildings, but since they're hidden, you can't pick them off from long range. In this case, you have little choice but to approach until they power up and reveal themselves.

After the first enemy appears, you have no place to hide (remember, there's no cover around here). The best thing you can do at this point is probably to retreat, then turn and fight once you've backed into familiar territory (where more enemies are unlikely to pop out at you). You could always charge in and confront your enemies on their own turf, but the threat of more of them powering up in there is very real.

TIP

When an enemy is targeted, your cockpit's Targeting window displays that enemy. By referring to this window you can tell what direction the enemy 'Mech is facing and what it's doing. Watch the window and, if at all possible, make your move when the enemy isn't pointed directly toward you. It'll be that much harder for the enemy to hit you if it's pointed in the wrong direction when you appear.

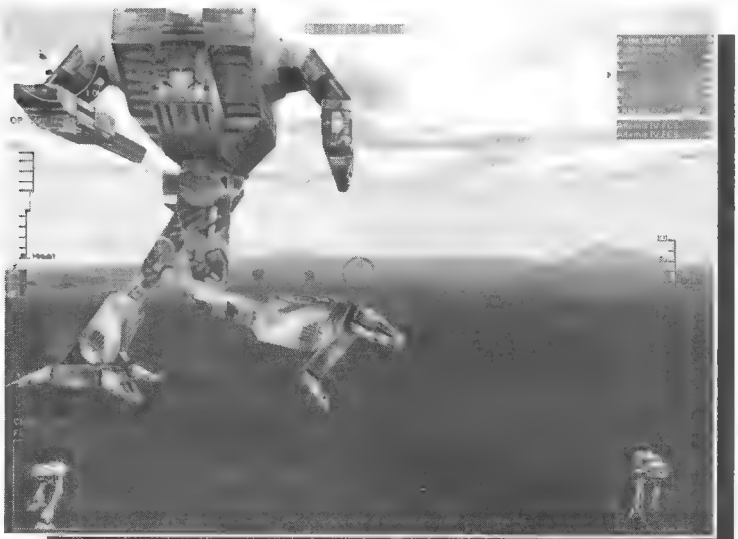
THE CIRCLE FIGHT

Figure 4-21. These two 'Mechs are circle fighting.

Most of the tactics we've addressed to this point involve hanging back and trying to manipulate the fight so that you don't have to deal with many enemies at once. However, you won't always have that luxury. Once you're out in the open field, with nothing to hide behind and an enemy or two at medium or close range, you'll just have to flat-out fight. A very common and useful technique for this situation is the circle fight. The circle fight works as follows:

1. Put the throttle somewhere in the mid to high range (between five and eight—but not at full throttle).
2. Aim your 'Mech at an imaginary point slightly to one side of the enemy, and start to run past him. Imagine that you're jousting: your course should take you right past the enemy.
3. As you run toward your enemy, torso twist toward him so that your 'Mech continues to face him even as he passes.
4. There will come a point where you've run all the way past your enemy and your torso can't twist any more; the enemy is no longer in your crosshairs.
5. When this happens, turn in the same direction that your torso is twisted. If you're twisted left, turn left. If you're twisted right, turn right. The enemy will come back into view.
6. Leave your torso more or less fully twisted and keep turning in the same direction, keeping the enemy in view. Just keep turning so that they enemy remains under your crosshairs. (You'll have to lay off the turning key sometimes, and you may have to adjust the throttle.)

After awhile it'll become clear that you're running circles around your enemy. And by leaving your torso twisted such that it faces the "interior" of the circle, you'll be keeping your crosshairs more or less focused on the enemy at all times.



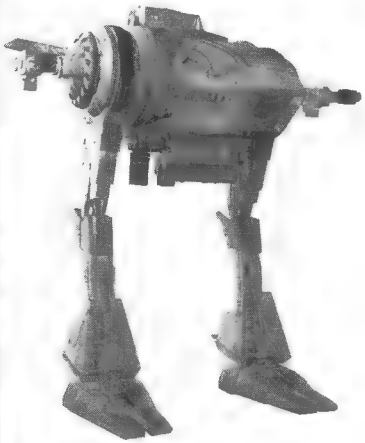


Figure 4-22. Note this 'Mech's torso, which is twisted almost all the way to the left. It's continually turning left as well, keeping the enemy in its sights and staying in motion.

The point of circle fighting is to present a laterally moving target to your opponent at all times. Your constant motion makes it hard for the enemy to target you. Initially, your motion also makes it hard for *you* to target your enemy. However, as you gain experience you'll find that aiming becomes easier, and the payoff is invaluable. Your constant motion will prevent the enemy from hitting you very consistently, which saves a lot of wear and tear on your BattleMech.

THE MODIFIED CIRCLE FIGHT

You can put your own spin on the circle fight, adding moves that suit your combat style. It can be useful to constantly adjust the throttle, for example; your oscillating speed can confuse an enemy. Also, you can adjust the distance at which you circle fight, based on the range of your weapons and those of your opponent.

Reversing the throttle can be a neat trick, as can occasionally breaking out of the circle entirely, only to start a new circle later. Jumping also can be added, if your 'Mech has jump jets.

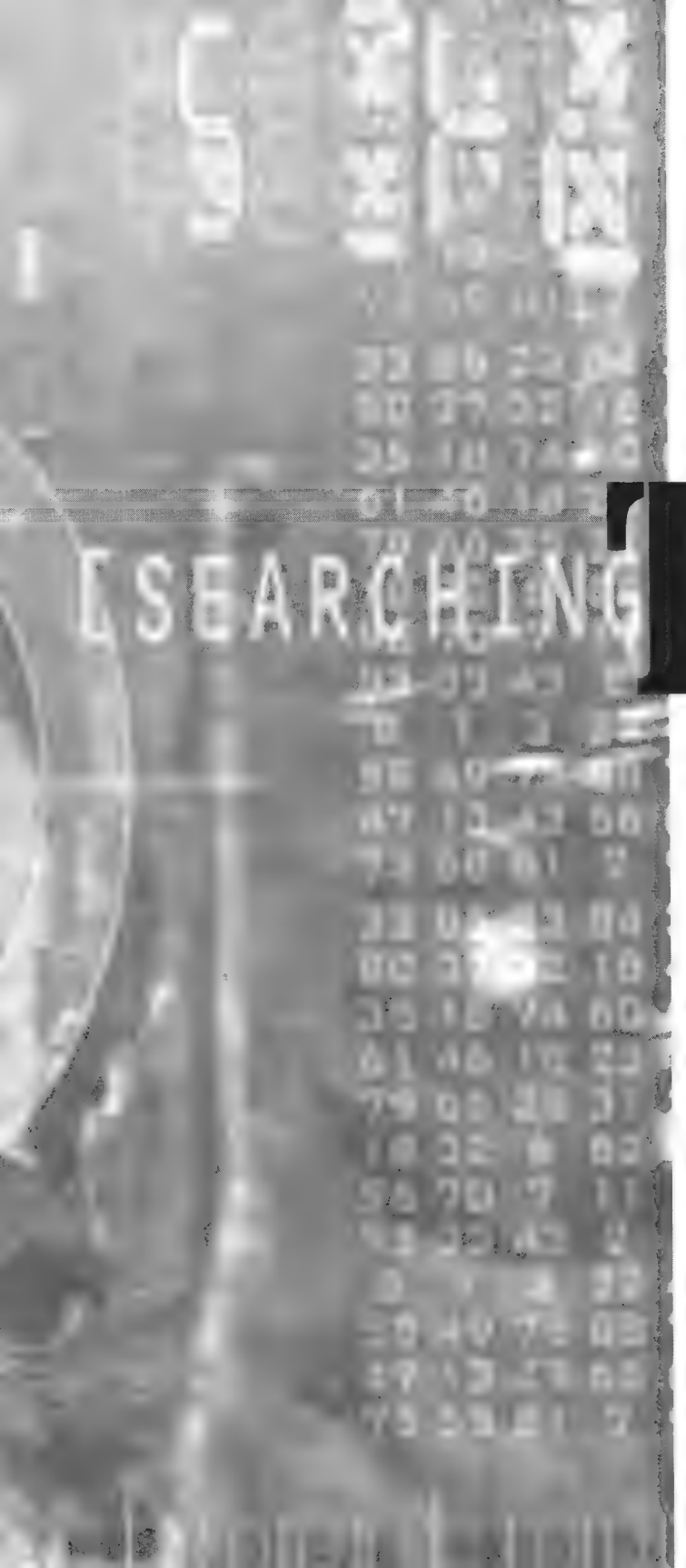
Figure 4-23. Periodic hops with the jump jets can improve your circle fighting, making it even harder for the enemy to aim at you.

Variations on the circle fight become more essential when you fight human foes; anything you can do to make yourself unpredictable and disrupt the enemy's shot is usually worth doing.

SUMMARY

We've explained the essentials of 'Mech combat, and now it's up to you to go out and practice them. The information in this chapter will help you improve, but actual piloting experience is a necessary part of improvement. Be prepared to take your lumps at first; it takes awhile to get used to all the controls, not to mention the "feel" of driving a 'Mech. As time goes on you'll improve by leaps and bounds, and soon be ready to tackle even the hardest campaign missions or multiplayer opponents.

PART II



CHAPTER 5
CAMPAIGN, MISSIONS 1–3

This chapter walks you through the first three missions of the *Pirate's Moon* campaign. Each walk-through contains a map of the area, suggestions on which 'Mechs and weapons to take, and detailed instructions for completing the mission.

Before diving into the walkthroughs, however, we suggest that you read the following section extensively. It contains special tips and advice on succeeding in *Pirate's Moon*.

PIRATE'S MOON: SPECIAL NOTES

Though similar to the missions of *MechWarrior III*, *Pirate's Moon* missions have a few interesting quirks. Here's a look at what to expect and how to succeed.

DIFFICULTY

The *Pirate's Moon* campaign is quite tough. If you've chosen to play on High difficulty, bear in mind that you may have to try certain missions several times, despite having this book to assist you. Luck plays a significant role in High difficulty missions, because a single lucky shot can end the mission for you or for one of your lancemates.

The strategies outlined in the following chapters have all been tested at the High difficulty level, so you can rest assured that they work. Just realize that High difficulty requires excellent reflexes, luck, and patience. You'll have to be good at 'Mech combat to succeed, even if you have a sound plan.

WEAPONS AND 'MECHS

If any particular mission gives you extreme difficulties, we recommend going back to the basics: heavy 'Mechs, multiple AMS, and laser weapons.

Use heavy 'Mechs with the maximum amount of armor. Usually you should take the heaviest 'Mechs available. This gives you a better margin for error than lightly armored, light 'Mechs.

Load several AMS onto every 'Mech in your lance. We recommend four or even five AMS per 'Mech. Four or five AMS will *completely* neutralize any missiles that are fired in your direction (except for Thunderbolts). This can easily mean the difference between success and failure.

Finally, an excellent weapon mix includes two or three Clan ER Large Lasers and a large group of Clan ER Medium Lasers—ideally, from seven to ten. The ER Large Lasers are used for long-range sniping and for destroying turrets at safe ranges. The ER Medium Lasers, when group-fired, deal massive damage when the enemy gets fairly close. Remember to aim for a leg, especially when fighting against large enemies.

Multiple Double Heat Sinks are a must if you're using so many lasers.

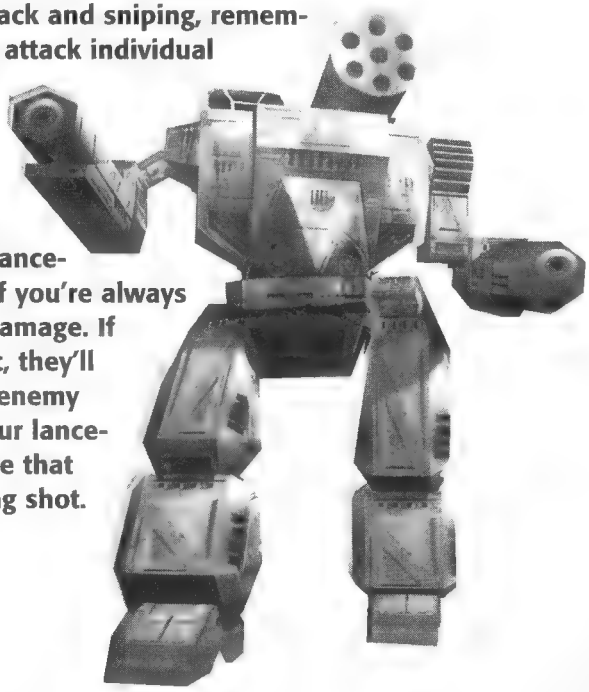
You can use other weapons, but these weapons are tried and true. Again, you can experiment all you want, but we recommend using this mix when the going gets tough.

LANCEMATES

Your lancemates are better shots in *Pirate's Moon* than in the original *MechWarrior III*, so ordering them to destroy a target is much more effective than it was in the past.

We recommend outfitting your lancemates with lots of Clan ER Large Lasers and Clan Double heat sinks. Doing so gives them excellent range, very good power, and freedom from ammo limitations. It's important to let them have the longest possible range, because you can't always count on them being in position to attack with medium- or short-range weapons.

Unless you plan on sitting back and sniping, remember to order your lancemates to attack individual targets. It's usually best to have them all attack a single target—and then you can attack that target, too, killing it quickly. Then assign them a new target.



Also, remember to let your lancemates precede you into battle. If you're always out in front, you'll take all the damage. If your lancemates are out in front, they'll take some of that damage. The enemy likes to target you instead of your lancemates, so you need to make sure that you aren't always the one getting shot.

TACTICS

Constantly stay in motion. If you want to stay in a particular spot, use the Toggle Throttle command to periodically switch from forward to reverse. This lets you move around and evade shots without really going anywhere.

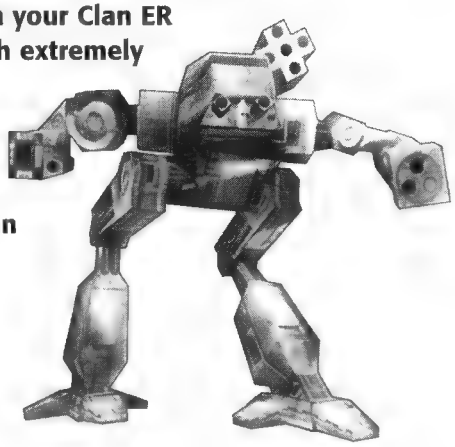
It's often good for you and your lancemates to stand back and snipe at the enemy from long range. Then, order your lancemates to attack when the enemy closes to medium-long range. Follow somewhat behind them, adding supporting fire.

It's useful to hide behind a hill, then climb just high enough to get a shot off, then reverse the throttle and sink back behind the hill again. This tactic lets you shoot without being exposed to much return fire.

Hills are also good for shielding you from several enemies while you concentrate on gunning down one particular enemy. Keep moving to keep the hill between you and the bulk of the enemy units, leaving only the foe that you want to shoot at in sight.

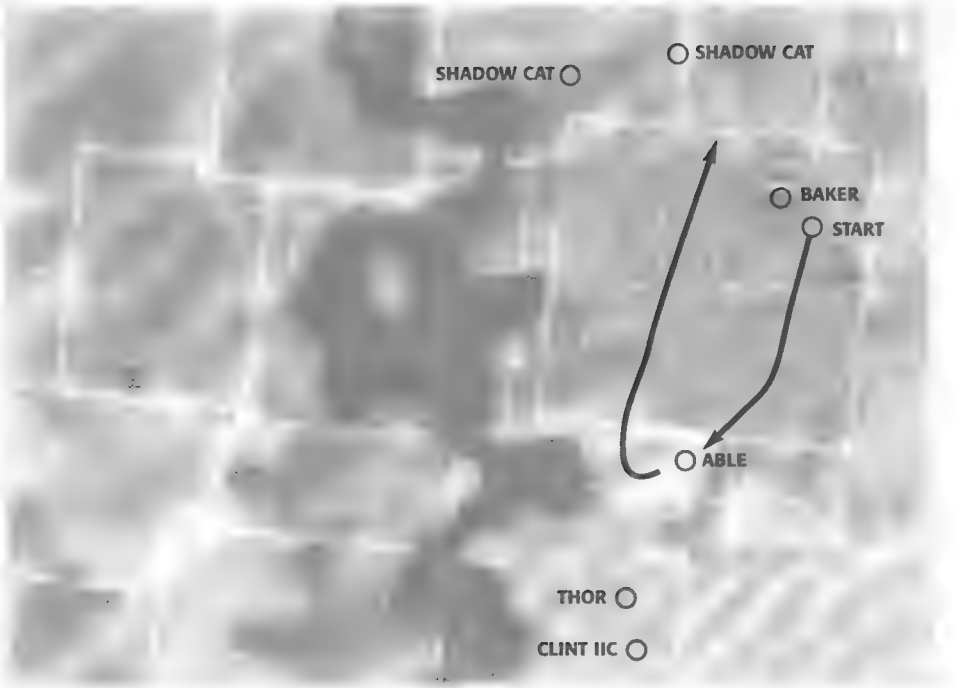
If an enemy gets behind your cover, you'll have to be careful. When hiding behind cover, like a hill, don't stand too close to the base of the hill. Back off somewhat, so that the enemy isn't too close (within 200 meters) when he appears over the hill. Also, move around while you're back there and, when the enemy is just about to get behind your cover, distract him by ordering your lancemates to attack.

Generally, you want to engage enemies at around 500 to 600 meters. This distance allows you to attack with your Clan ER Medium Lasers, but makes you hard to hit with extremely potent short-range weapons, like Heavy Autocannons. Don't let heavy enemies like Atlases get any closer than this.



Finally, review the tactics explained earlier in the book. You'll need all the tricks you can muster to win at High difficulty.

MISSION 1



This first mission isn't terribly difficult. Your task is to defend a pair of bases from a pirate attack. You can easily defend both bases if you know what to expect.

Perhaps the most important part of this mission isn't accomplishing your goals, but salvaging a 'Mech that will be useful in later missions. Take special care to attack your enemies in the legs, to enhance the probability of salvage.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Protect Federated Suns Base at Point Baker (Primary)**
- **Protect Rim Collective Camp at Point Able (Secondary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This defense mission requires you to run first in one direction, then the other. It isn't particularly dangerous if you make effective use of Epona Rhi, your lance-mate, and if you take along a decent number of lasers.

Your 'Mech and weapon selection is limited. Stick with the Centurion for yourself, and put Epona Rhi in the Puma. We recommend dropping the Centurion's LRM 10 in favor of a couple more lasers and an extra heat sink. Also, crank up the armor. The Centurion starts out quite weakly armored.

The Puma can be left as is; its ER PPCs make it a legitimate threat.

The general game plan is to run south toward Point Baker, destroy the 'Mechs you find there, then immediately turn back to the north and intercept a wave of 'Mechs that tries to attack Point Able.

Your enemies in this mission include:

- 1 Thor
- 1 Clint IIC
- 2 Shadow Cats

STRATEGY

You and Epona Rhi start the mission near Point Baker. Immediately turn south and start heading toward Point Able at full speed.

As you approach Point Able, a Thor appears to the south and you hear a desperate radio transmission from the Rim Collective Camp. Order Epona Rhi to attack the Thor, then go after it yourself. As usual, aim for a leg if possible.

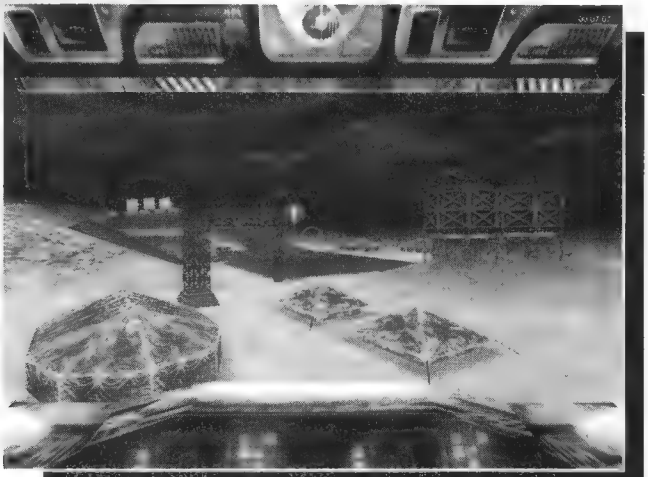


Figure 5-1. Proceed south to the Rim Collective Camp.

Having the Thor along for later missions makes them significantly easier. However, don't despair if you fail to salvage it. Salvaging a Shadow Cat in this mission is acceptable, too.

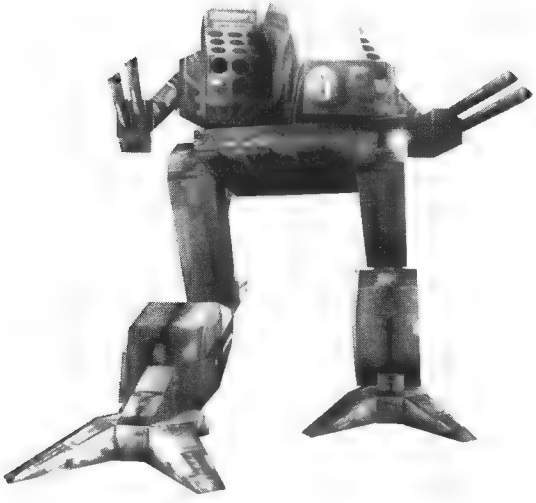
As you're battling the Thor, a Clint IIC will show up from the south. If you're efficient in killing the Thor, you won't have to worry about dealing with two enemies at once. Focus your attention on the Clint IIC when the Thor has gone down.

The Clint should be an easy kill. The instant it goes down, spin around and proceed back toward Point Baker (where you started the mission) at full speed.

When you reach the dome at Point Baker, a pair of Shadow Cats appears from the north. You can either assign Epona Rhi to attack one of them while you take out the other, or team up on one and then go for the other when the first is destroyed. The first course of action is probably best, because it distracts both Shadow Cats from wrecking the Point Baker base.

TIP

The Thor is an excellent 'Mech that you'll want to salvage. Shooting off a leg is not only a fast way of killing it, but it also increases the chances of salvage.



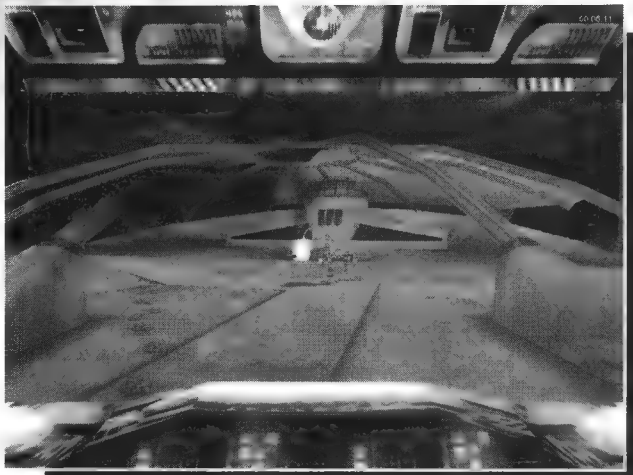


Figure 5-2. Don't let the Shadow Cats fully destroy this dome.

The Shadow Cats' target, specifically, is the large dome at Point Baker. If they manage to destroy this dome, you automatically lose. By engaging the Shadow Cats immediately, however, you can distract them before they completely wreck the dome.

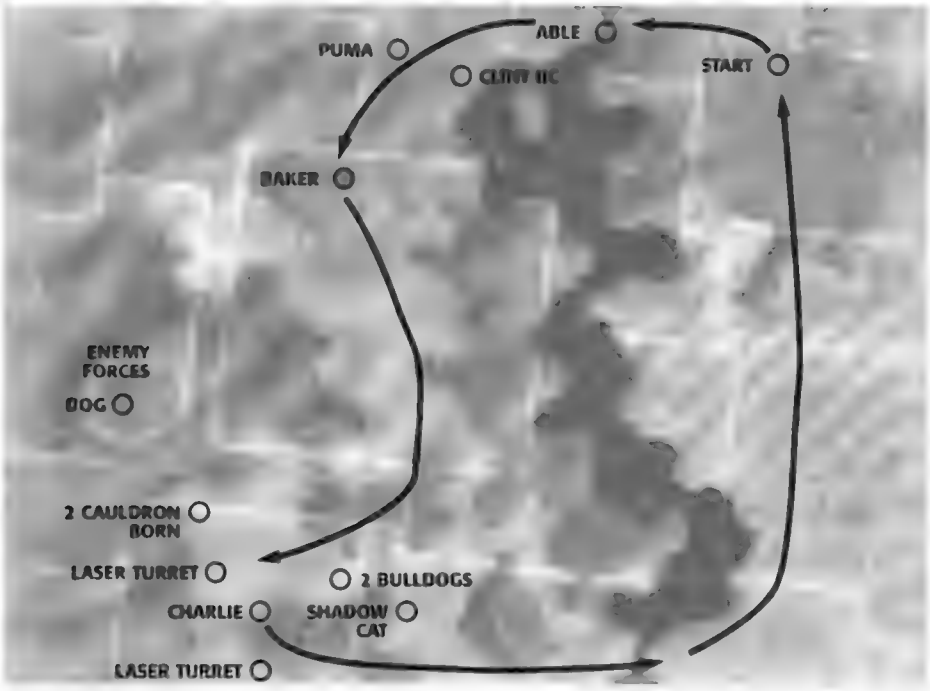
TIP

As you fight the Shadow Cats, a DropShip lifts off. Ignore it, and keep after those Shadow Cats!

Figure 5-3. Don't spend too much time watching the DropShip leave. Concentrate on the Shadow Cats instead.

When you've destroyed both Shadow Cats, the mission is a success.

MISSION 2



Mission 2 requires you to take out a pair of pirate Satellite Antennas. These Antennas look like massive satellite dishes, and are guarded by 'Mechs and Laser Turrets.

You'll have to equip your 'Mechs with jump jets for this mission—there are no exceptions. They'll need to cross a deep chasm with those jets.

The pirate base at Point Dog should be avoided at all costs. Approaching Point Dog is equivalent to failing the mission—you're going to take a beating, regardless of how good you are. Don't try to bite off more than you can chew! Stick to the objectives as explained in the mission briefing, and you'll do just fine.

Those objectives are as follows:

- Jump across the canyon at Point Able (Primary)
- Destroy pirate Antenna at Point Baker (Primary)
- Destroy pirate Antenna at Point Charlie (Primary)
- Avoid pirate base at Point Dog (Secondary)
- Return to Federated Suns Base at Point Start (Final)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This mission is harder than the first one. Fortunately for you, the fights are usually quite self-contained. Instead of a constant stream of foes, you'll face a few enemies at a time, followed by periods of respite that last until you uncover the next pocket of enemies. You can use the down time to return to the MFBs for repairs.

Speaking of the MFBs, you won't be able to make them follow you everywhere because of the large chasm in the middle of the map. The best you can do is jump back across the chasm and visit them. This is inconvenient, but if you're heavily damaged you should be patient and return for repairs.

We recommend using the two heaviest 'Mechs you possess. Very likely these will be the Centurion and a Shadow Cat salvaged from the last mission—but if you were lucky, you'll have a Thor.

Regardless of what 'Mechs you use, equip them with at least three jump jets apiece. Make sure that Epona Rhi's 'Mech has long-range weapons like Clan ER PPCs or Clan ER Large Lasers. For your own 'Mech, take an assortment of medium-sized lasers and a single Clan ER Large Laser. If one of those isn't available, take a different weapon with excellent range. You'll want a long-range weapon to easily take out turrets from afar.

Your enemies include:

- 1 Clint IIC
- 1 Puma
- 3 Laser Turrets
- 2 Bulldogs
- 1 Shadow Cat
- 2 Cauldron Born

STRATEGY

When the mission starts, head due west toward Point Able. You'll find a chasm here. The narrow spot that's best for jumping across is clearly marked by a light. You'll also notice a Clint IIC on the other side of the chasm.

Figure 5-4. Jump across the chasm at the narrowest point. Line up the jump carefully, because a fall is lethal.

TIP

To jump across, run toward the chasm and hit the jump jets just as you reach the edge. Hold down the pressure on the jump jets key until you're over land again. Then let up, and hit the jump jets key a final time just as you're touching down, to soften your fall.

Jump across the chasm, and immediately attack the Clint IIC when you reach the other side. If you're seriously damaged by the Clint IIC, you can jump back across the chasm, repair in the MFBs, and then jump across a third time.

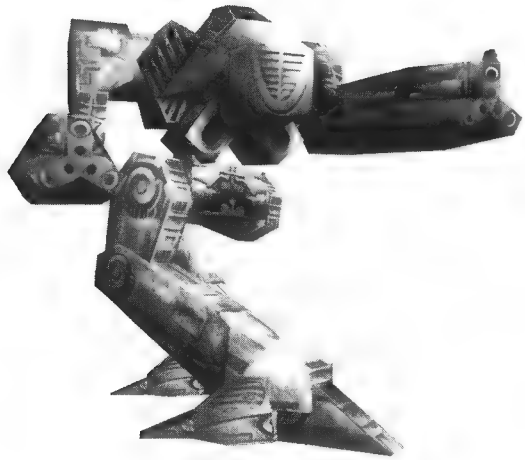


Figure 5-5. Reduce the Clint IIC to a pile of ash.

Proceed a bit farther west, and a Puma will appear. Try to get close to the Puma quickly and destroy it from close range; its ER PPCs give it the advantage at long range. Again, after the Puma is destroyed, you can go back to the MFBs for repairs if you're severely damaged.

TIP

Epona Rhi shouldn't have any trouble jumping across the chasm, as long as you equipped her 'Mech with three jump jets. Just let her follow you.

Now proceed south toward Point Baker. A Laser Turret near Point Baker will show up on radar as you proceed. Hug the edge of the chasm as you go south, and walk up any hills or high slopes you find. If you find a high point, you'll be able to target the Laser Turret with your Clan ER Large Laser and destroy it from a range where it can't fight back.

When the Laser Turret is destroyed, proceed toward Point Baker. Target the massive Satellite Antenna you find there and blow it up.

Figure 5-6. Destroy this Satellite Antenna to complete a primary objective.

With the Antenna destroyed, head south toward Point Charlie. Take care not to stray too far west as you do so; if anything, veer to the east. Remember that you're supposed to avoid the pirate base at Point Dog.

As you approach Point Charlie, follow the path indicated on the Battle Map. This path takes you up onto a ridge. A pair of Bulldogs will appear as you approach this ridge. Go just far enough up the ridge to

take a shot at the Bulldogs, then, retreat. Keep retreating back to the north as you fight the Bulldogs. These vehicles have deadly Autocannons, which you should stay away from at all costs! That's why you should retreat as you fight.

When the Bulldogs are gone, keep following the path toward Point Charlie. A Shadow Cat and a pair of Laser Turrets will appear on the radar. Again, retreat behind the ridge. You want to lure the Shadow Cat away from the Laser Turrets before fighting, or else take out the Laser Turrets from long range. The worst thing you can do is run directly toward the Shadow Cat and the Laser Turrets, and take a beating from all three at once.

When the Shadow Cat and Laser Turrets are destroyed, you're free to approach Point Charlie. Destroy the Satellite Antenna at Point Charlie with concentrated fire.

TIP

If the Shadow Cat won't follow you behind the ridge, run just far enough up the ridge to take a shot at a Laser Turret, then slide back behind the ridge again. Repeat until the Laser Turrets are gone. Once they're gone, feel free to charge in and destroy the Shadow Cat.

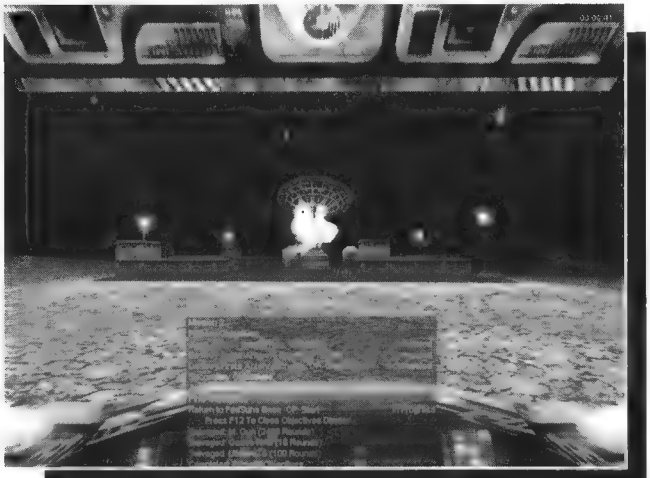


Figure 5-7. Destroy the Satellite Antenna at Point Charlie, then get out of there quickly!

You've now completed your primary objectives. The only significant task that remains is to return to your original starting point. The easiest way to do this is by immediately running east—the path is marked on the Battle Map. This path takes you to another part of the chasm that's narrow enough to jump across. After making the jump, you should simply run north to Point Start. You'll win the mission when you get there.

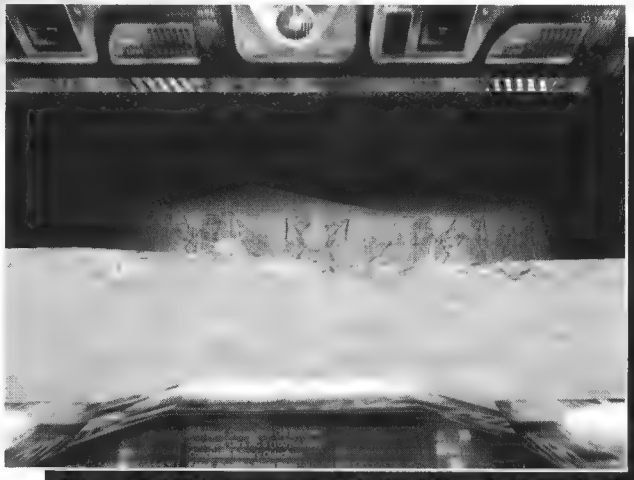
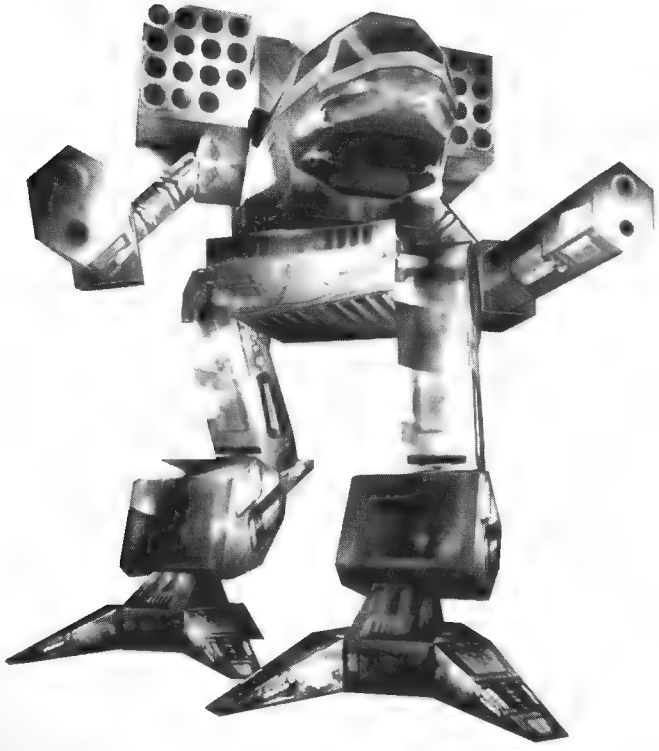


Figure 5-8. This narrow part of the chasm isn't marked by an Op Point, but it's a fine place to jump across.

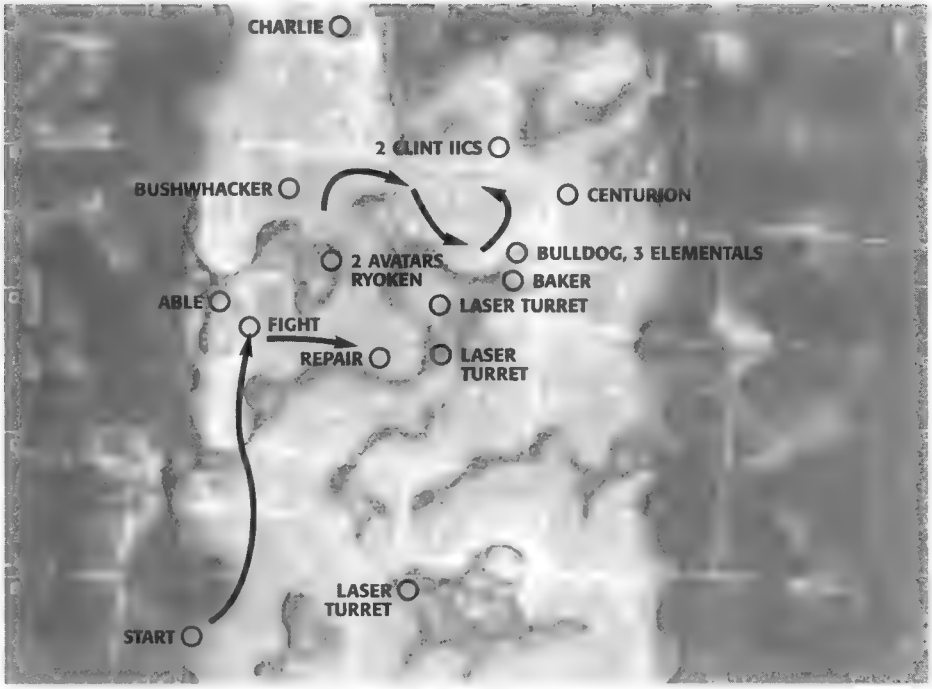
If you're foolish enough to approach Point Dog, you'll be annihilated by a trio of rapid-fire Autocannon Turrets, an Atlas, a Mad Cat, and a Supernova. You simply can't win that fight—or even last more than a second or two—so we haven't listed these enemies in the Intelligence Briefing. Just stay far, far away from Point Dog.



TIP

You also can try to backtrack to Point Able and jump across the chasm at that point, but this path brings you into contact with pirates from Point Dog, who are quite annoyed that you've just destroyed their Satellite Antennas. Specifically, a pair of Cauldron Born will chase you—and they're *very* tough. So stick to the path indicated on the Battle Map.

MISSION 3



Your task in this mission is to protect an allied camp at Point Able. The most important part of this camp is a small convoy of trucks bearing precious ore. If you manage to keep the camp alive long enough, the trucks will eventually flee to the north, and your responsibility is then to protect the trucks instead of the camp.

If you manage to survive the initial onslaught, you'll then need to take out a pirate camp at Point Baker. And if *that* goes smoothly, you can mop up a couple more 'Mechs to complete your secondary objective.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Protect allied camp at Point Able (Primary)**
- **Destroy trucks and defenses at Point Baker (Primary)**
- **Defeat all enemies (Secondary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This mission features tough combat, especially at the start. You'll have to strike a delicate balance between defending the camp at Point Able and saving your own skin. The best policy is to keep running at all times, facing one side of your 'Mech toward the enemy. Remember that when one side of your 'Mech gets shot up, you should turn around and present your other (undamaged) side to the enemy. This often means the difference between success and failure.

One great asset that you'll enjoy in this mission is the large amount of water. Standing in the water allows your 'Mechs to cool off quickly. Use this to your advantage by taking the biggest possible 'Mechs and loading them up with large quantities of laser weapons—mainly Medium ER Lasers in big groups, with a couple of Large ER Lasers for long-range turret destruction. The vast heat generated by these weapons will be dissipated very quickly if you stand in the water during most battles.

Your enemies include the following:

- 3 Laser Turrets
- 2 Avatars
- 1 Ryoken
- 1 Bushwhacker
- 1 Bulldog
- 3 Elementals
- 1 Centurion
- 2 Clint IICs

STRATEGY

Your forces start out in the southwest corner of the combat area. Immediately proceed north toward Point Able at full speed.

As you approach Point Able, you hear a distress call. Several enemy 'Mechs will appear to the east: two Avatars and a Ryoken. Plus, there is a pair of Autocannon Turrets on the land to the east, and a Bushwhacker will soon appear from the north.

Move as quickly as possible to the patch of water labeled "Fight" on the Battle Map. Here you should run back and forth, blasting the enemy with group-fired lasers as they approach. Be sure to have Epona Rhi attacking an enemy at all times. You shouldn't use the land to the north or south as cover, regardless of how much you may wish to, because you must distract the enemy from attacking the trucks at Point Able.

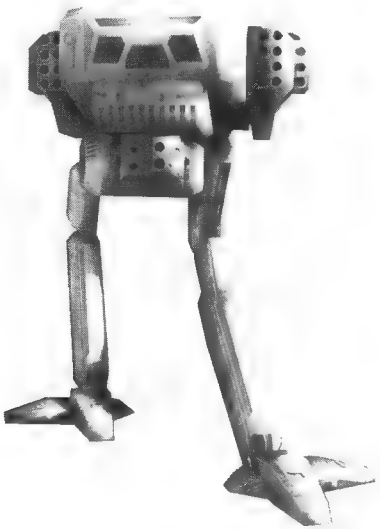
Figure 5-9. This is Point Able, which you must defend. Stay between it and the enemy.

It'll be a tough fight—the toughest part of the mission. There's no time for repairs or for hiding. Stay in the water to minimize heat, and run at full speed (sideways in relation to your foes) at all times. Keep ordering Epona to attack a new enemy when her current target is destroyed. Don't stray too far from this area.

At some point the trucks at Point Able will have seen enough, and will drive north toward safety. They'll alert you that they're leaving with a radio message. At this point, you need to keep fighting (if there are any foes left) but also watch the radar. If any enemy 'Mechs are in a position to intercept the departing trucks, you must run north and fire at them to distract them.

TIP

If you aren't aggressive enough about placing yourself in between the enemy and Point Able, the camp will be destroyed and you'll lose.



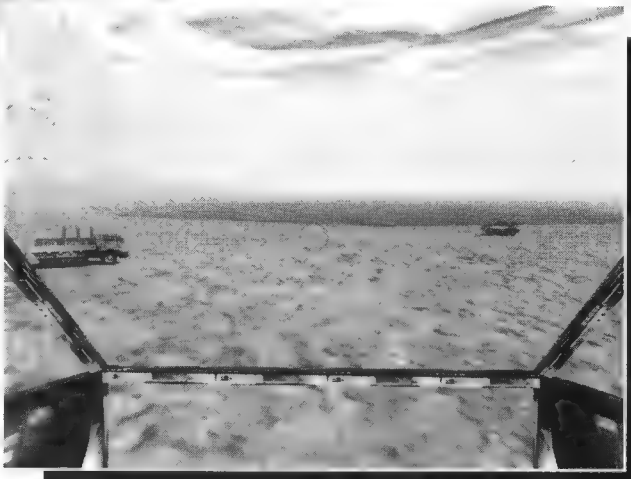


Figure 5-10. These two trucks have fled Point Able. Protecting them is now your most important job.

TIP

This whole battle is very tough, especially at the highest difficulty level. You'll need to be accurate and a little lucky to win it.

Eventually you'll finish off all the 'Mechs in the area, and both turrets as well. There may be a Bulldog visible on the map, but it won't move to attack. At this point, proceed to the point marked "Repair" on the Battle Map, summon your MFBs there, and repair your 'Mechs.

Now proceed north along the indicated path. Stick to the water as shown on the Battle Map, looping under a bridge and then to the east. Your 'Mech's head will fully submerge.

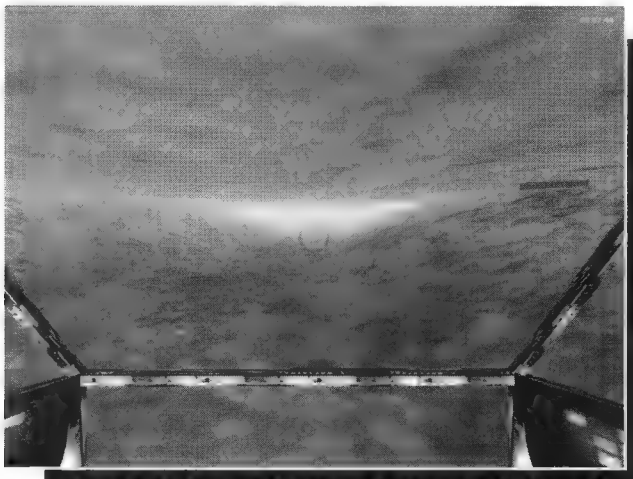


Figure 5-11. You won't see much as you walk through the deep water—but the enemy won't see much of you, either.

As you approach the pirate base at Point Baker, a trio of Elementals will power up at the base. A Centurion will also approach from the northeast. Keep moving toward the base, and start shooting at these targets. It's easier when your head comes back out of the water—but don't get *too* close, and don't leave the water.

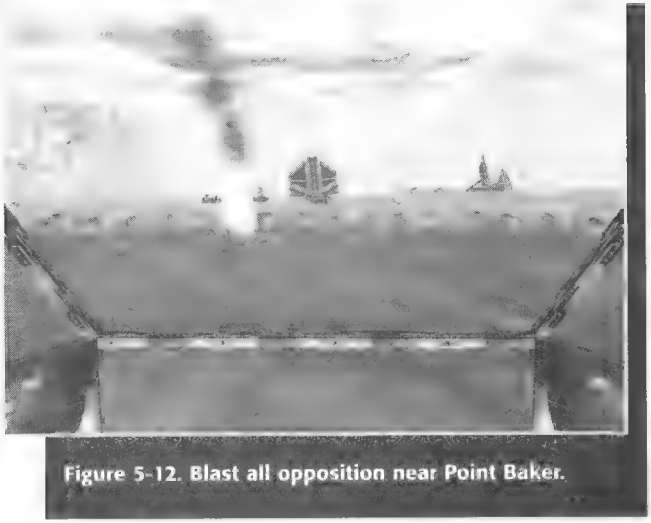


Figure 5-12. Blast all opposition near Point Baker.

When the Bulldog, Elementals, and Centurion are gone, walk onto land at Point Baker. Locate a truck and shoot at the cab of the truck to detonate it. Your primary objectives are now complete.

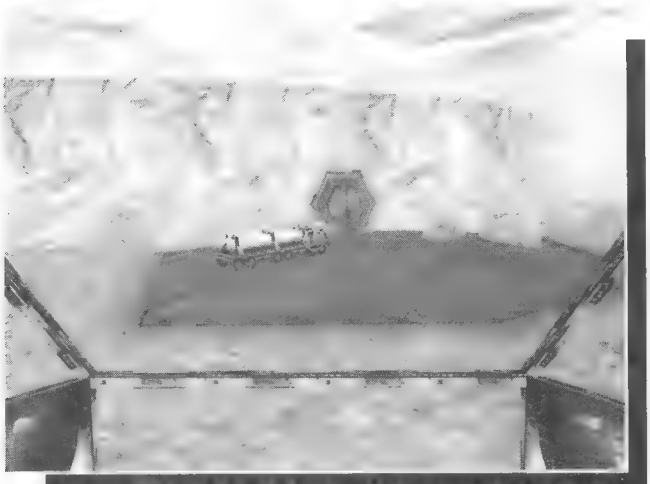
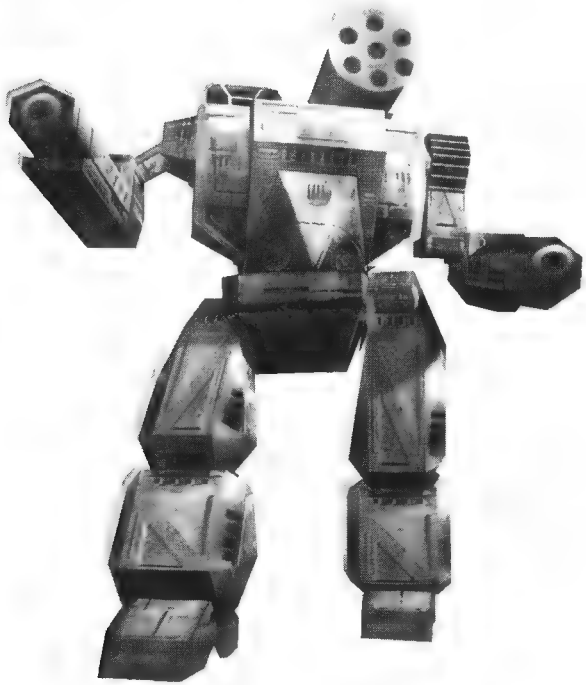


Figure 5-13. Detonate this truck to complete a primary objective.

A pair of Clint IICs now appears in the northeast. If your 'Mechs are severely damaged, you can now quit the mission. However, if you're still in reasonably good fighting shape, you can proceed north into the water and destroy the Clint IICs. As always, stay in the water to give yourself a heat advantage.

Figure 5-14. Finish off a pair of Clint IICs to complete your secondary objective.

When the Clint IICs are gone, you'll have completed all possible objectives. Quit out of the mission.

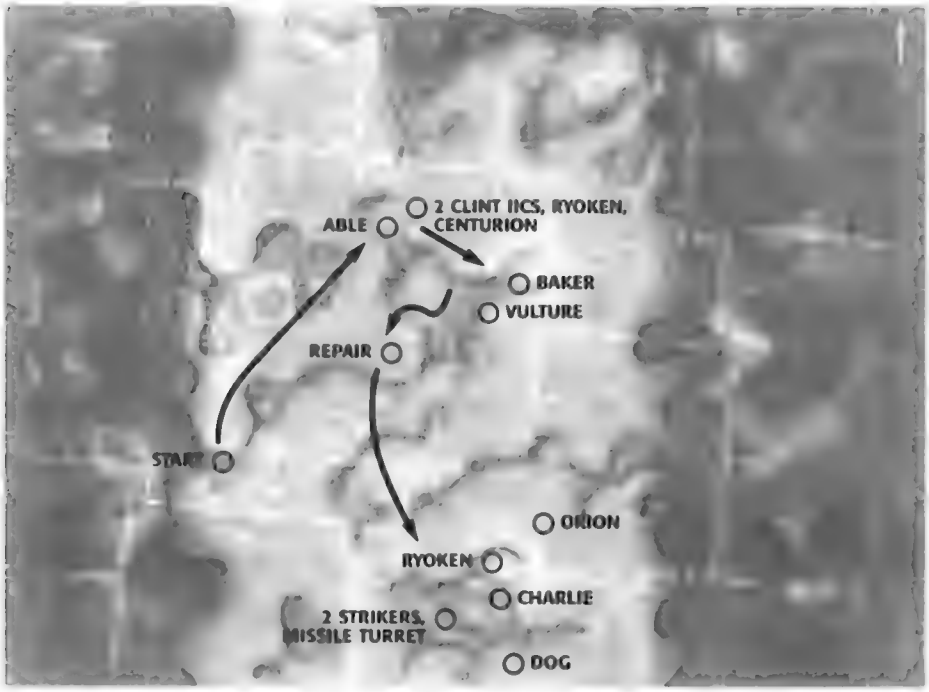


CHAPTER 6
CAMPAIGN, MISSIONS 4–6

The next three missions raise the bar of difficulty somewhat, but they're manageable. Two of the three missions require you to defend friendly targets and attack enemy targets, so you'll have to worry about more than just slugging it out.

As the opposition gets tougher, you need to use more and more combat tricks to win. Hiding behind ridges, presenting the undamaged side of your 'Mech to the enemy, and sending your lancemates in ahead of you are all useful tactics in the following missions.

MISSION 4



Mission 4 forces you to hurry. Your task is to defend a moving convoy against attack. Along the way you should also destroy a pair of pirate camps.

Early on, you need to hurry to reach the convoy before it's decimated by an ambush. Later, you must scramble ahead of the convoy and destroy potential threats before the trucks are placed in jeopardy.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Protect allied convoy at Point Able (Primary)
- Escort convoy to safety at Point Dog (Primary)
- Destroy camp defenses at Point Baker (Secondary)
- Destroy camp at Point Charlie (Secondary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This mission occurs in the same locale as Mission 3. Thus, the same rules apply. You still have lots of water to wade in, so you should overload your 'Mech with medium-range laser weapons, and plan on staying in the water during combat to keep heat levels manageable.

You should take your biggest 'Mechs on this mission. If you've collected any AMS, be sure to load them onto your 'Mechs to assist with defense.

If your 'Mechs aren't particularly fast, you may want to ratchet up their speed a few notches. The 'Mechs you're likely to have at this point should still be small and fast enough to complete the mission, but if you try it and have trouble reaching the convoy before it's destroyed, try again with slightly bigger engines. You can skimp on heat sinks to make room for more engine size.

The trick to this mission is striking a balance between saving the convoy and keeping your 'Mechs healthy. If the convoy is destroyed, you need to try again and hurry up. Be more reckless, and throw your 'Mechs in the way of the enemy. The convoy is definitely more fragile than your 'Mechs.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Clint IICs
- 2 Ryoken
- 1 Centurion
- 1 Vulture
- 2 Strikers
- 1 Missile Turret
- 1 Orion

STRATEGY

You start out at the western edge of the combat area. Immediately proceed due northeast toward Point Able, where a small convoy of ore trucks is being ambushed by pirates.

As you walk toward Point Able, you'll hear radio transmissions from Werewolf, a friendly pilot in an Avatar who's helping to guard the trucks. He'll be killed before you get close enough to assist him; don't worry, there's no help for it.

As you approach Point Able, don't try anything fancy, and don't slow down. Proceed toward Point Able at full speed, targeting the enemy 'Mechs that start appearing on your screen—but *don't* veer off course. You need to get close to Point Able to distract the enemy 'Mechs that are attacking the trucks. If you're too slow or fail to get in the way of the enemy, they'll demolish the trucks and the mission will fail.

Figure 6-1. The convoy trucks will wait near Point Able until you've cleared out the nearby enemy 'Mechs

Your enemies are two Clint IICs, a Ryoken, and a Centurion. They all approach from the southeast. Concentrate on whichever 'Mechs are closest to the trucks, and don't let any of them get past you.

TIP

If you're too slow, try again and focus on getting right into the midst of the enemy. Also, order Epona to attack an enemy as soon as he appears; this helps to distract the enemy.

If even *that* doesn't work, you may need to crank up your 'Mech's speed slightly for this mission. If your 'Mech is ridiculously slow, you won't be able to get into position quickly enough to defend the trucks.

The fight is intense, but if you load up on medium-range laser weapons and stay mostly in the water, you should be able to take out enemy 'Mechs with just a couple of group-fired shots.

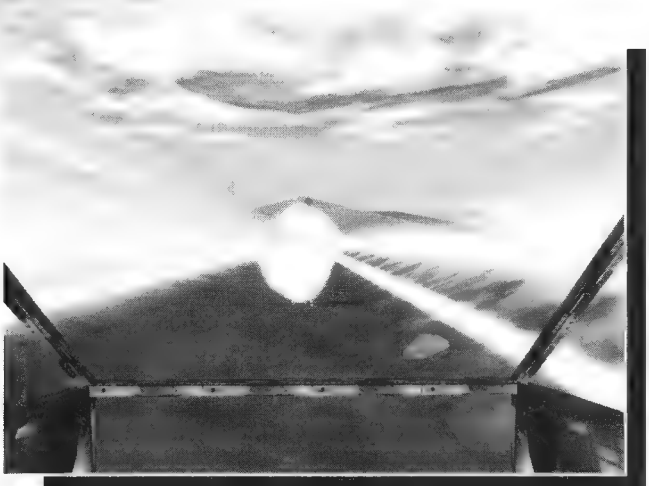


Figure 6-2. Standing in the water allows you to unleash massive laser attacks on your enemies—without any fear of overheating.

When these four 'Mechs are destroyed, you'll notice that a Vulture near Point Baker has started moving toward the trucks. Proceed southeast toward the Vulture, meanwhile ordering the MFBs to move to the spot on the Battle Map labeled "Repair." When the MFBs have started on their way, attack the Vulture (remember to stay in the water) and destroy it before it does any damage to the convoy.

You've now defended the convoy trucks and destroyed the camp defenses at Point Baker. Your 'Mechs are probably quite damaged. Hurry to the "Repair" spot on the Battle Map. If you ordered your MFBs there earlier, as instructed, they should now be in the vicinity. Quickly repair your 'Mechs, if necessary.

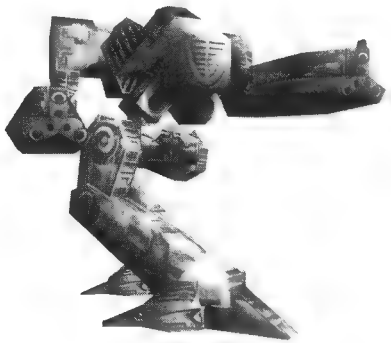
The remaining convoy truck(s) won't stop or pause, so you'll have to hurry your repairs. If you're too slow, the trucks will wander into enemy territory and be destroyed.

After fixing your 'Mech(s) you should hurry due south from the repair point, following the path marked on the Battle Map. Try to get in front of the trucks.

There are a pair of Strikers and a Missile Turret near Point Charlie. There's also a Ryoken somewhat to the east. Approach these enemies directly, targeting whichever you get a clear view of first. Have Epona attack as well.

TIP

If you were too slow, the convoy will be attacked and destroyed near Point Charlie. Try again, and speed up the process of getting to and from the repair point.



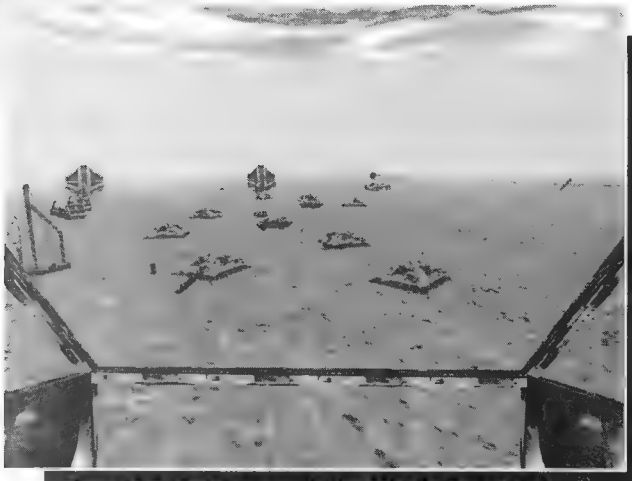


Figure 6-3. Only approach the Missile Turret and Strikers on land if they refuse to come toward you. It's better to stay in the water.

As you're destroying the foes near Point Charlie, a final threat appears: An Orion powers up in the water to the east. If your other foes are still alive, try to use the land as cover and shelter your 'Mechs from the Orion while you finish off the others. Then, charge in and blast the Orion with everything you've got. Stick to the water as usual.

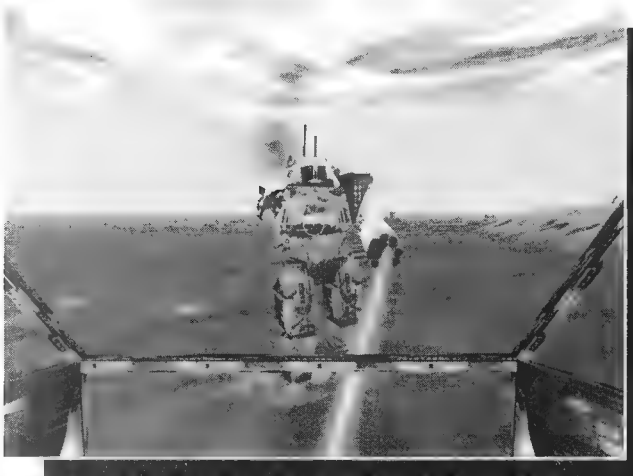
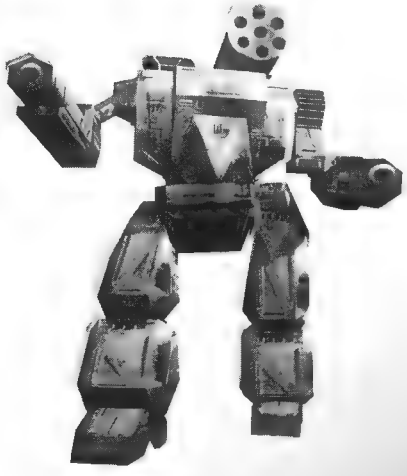


Figure 6-4. Blast the Orion, and you're home free.

When the Orion is gone, you're in the clear. The remains of the convoy will move to Point Dog. When they arrive, your mission is a success.



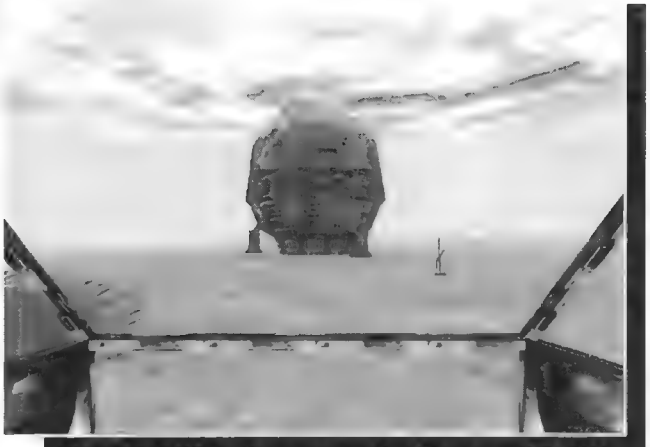
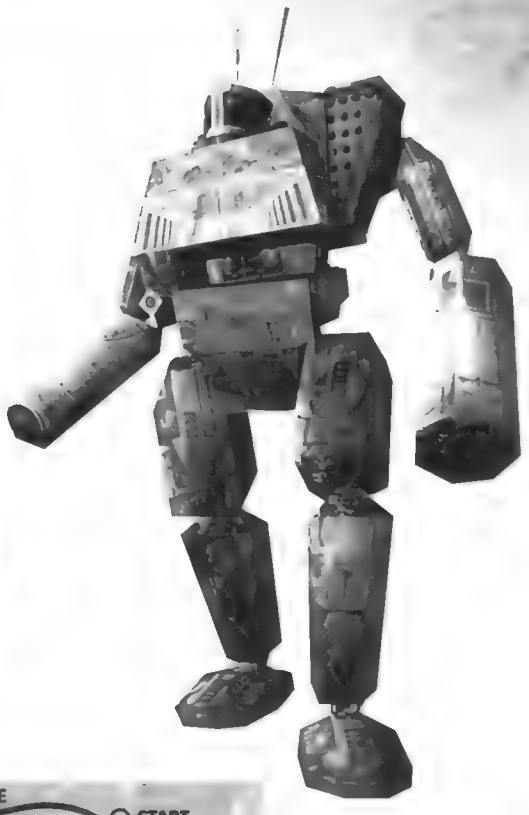
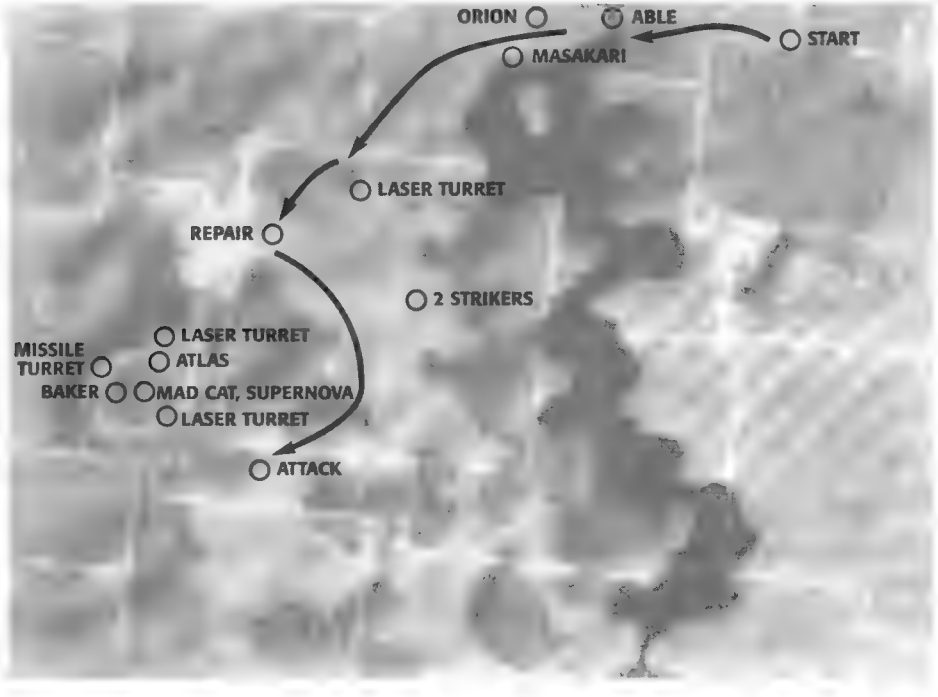


Figure 6-5. When the convoy gets close enough to this DropShip, the mission is a success.



MISSION 5



Your main task in this mission is to destroy the pirates' base and all of its defenders. Everything else is secondary.

Coordinating your forces is a bit tougher in this mission than in previous ones. You'll have two lancemates to command instead of just one, plus you'll have to manage your MFBs and work around a small contingent of friendly Strikers that come along for the attack.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Destroy pirate base and defenders at Point Baker (Primary)
- Protect bridge as tanks cross at Point Able (Secondary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Don't let the Strikers dictate your strategy. It's okay if they get destroyed; they're simply cannon fodder. This mission is easiest if you hang back behind a ridge and occasionally take potshots at the enemy, rather than charging in with the Strikers and facing the enemy head-on.

Take your biggest 'Mechs on this mission. Equip them all with jump jets. Equip your lancemates with Clan ER Large Lasers, and take along one of those yourself (for turret killing). The bulk of your weapons, however, should be Clan ER Medium Lasers.

This mission pits you against some very heavy foes, but if you use the ridges to your advantage you'll come out ahead.

Your enemies include:

- 1 Orion
- 1 Masakari
- 3 Laser Turrets
- 1 Missile Turret
- 1 Atlas
- 1 Supernova
- 1 Mad Cat

STRATEGY

Your forces start in a base to the northeast. Point your 'Mech toward Point Able and proceed there at full speed.

At Point Able, you notice a bridge. Because your 'Mechs are likely to be more than 50 tons, you should use jump jets to cross the chasm; be careful to avoid walking on the bridge.

As you fly across the chasm, you notice a pair of 'Mechs approaching in the distance—an Orion and a Masakari. The Orion is closer. One or both of the enemy 'Mechs may be shooting at the bridge when you arrive. Attack the Orion, then turn your attention to the Masakari. Be sure to have your lancemates help you attack the Masakari.

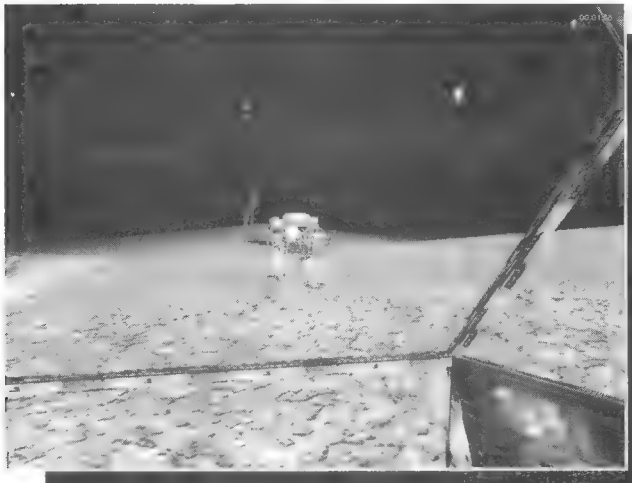


Figure 6-6. Destroy the Orion and Masakari

When both 'Mechs are destroyed, check the radar for the Strikers. They should cross the bridge soon.

TIP

Around this time, you should order your MFBs to start moving toward the spot labeled "Repair" on the Battle Map.

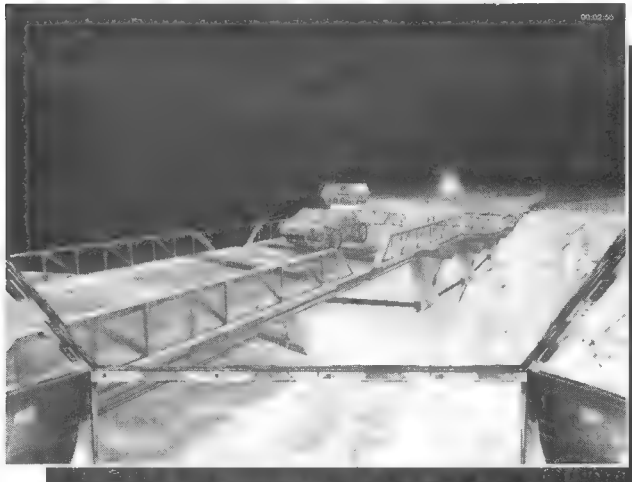


Figure 6-7. Order your MFBs to the spot labeled "Repair" while the Strikers cross the bridge.

Proceed toward the repair spot on the Battle Map. As you approach, you come across a Laser Turret. Shoot it to pieces as soon as it's visible.

You're also intercepted by a pair of Strikers approaching from the southeast. Destroy them without veering too far from your course.

If you ordered your MFBs to the repair point earlier, they'll get there about the same time you do. Repair your 'Mechs quickly. You'll notice a Laser Turret on your radar, somewhat to the southwest, but ignore it for now—it's blocked by a ridge.

Figure 6-8. Repair your 'Mechs quickly when you reach the MFBs.

After quick repairs, continue along the path marked on the Battle Map. The three Strikers shouldn't be too far ahead of you.

TIP

Don't worry about the Strikers. It *can* be useful to time your attack on the pirate base so that it coincides with the Strikers' attack, because the Strikers can absorb some damage that would otherwise hit you and your friends. But don't dash in madly just to support the Strikers. They aren't that important.

Eventually you'll reach the spot labeled "Attack." It's a hilly area to the southeast of Point Baker. When you reach it, you should hide behind a ridge and cycle through the targets at Point Baker. There should be several, including three turrets, an Atlas, a Supernova, and a Mad Cat. Move to the top of a ridge, take a shot at your selected target, and then slide back down into the cover of the ridge. Repeat.

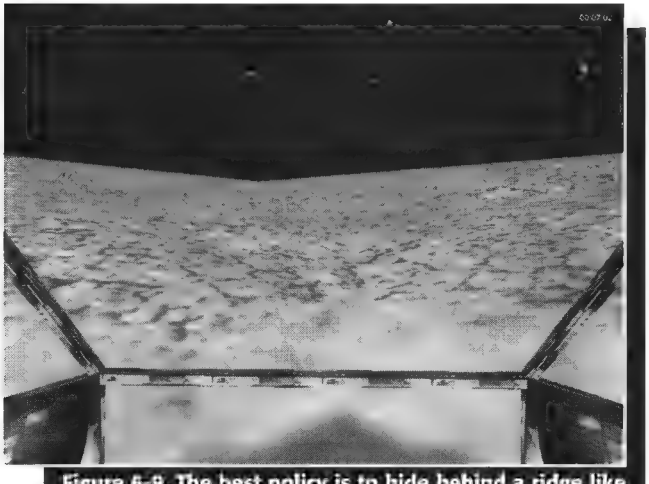


Figure 6-9. The best policy is to hide behind a ridge like this, and then run up just far enough for a quick shot before retreating to safety.

The Atlas is likely to charge after you. Wait for it to become visible over the crest of the ridge, then blast it with everything you've got. Have your lancemates attack at this moment, too. Be sure to stay somewhat back from the ridge and stay in motion, or the Atlas' heavy fire will destroy you.

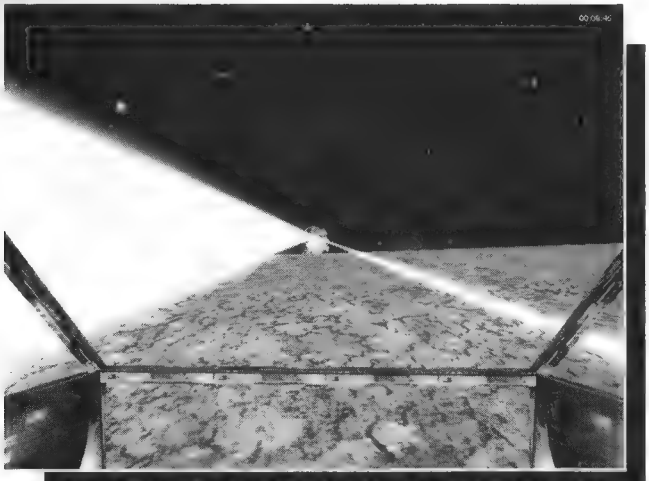


Figure 6-10. Stay behind the ridge, and blast the Atlas as it walks into view.

When the Atlas is destroyed, go back to the trick of climbing up the ridge just far enough to get a shot at a target, then slipping back down the ridge to avoid return fire.

TIP

Stay behind the ridge as you fight the Atlas. If you run up the ridge during combat, the remaining enemy 'Mechs and turrets near Point Baker can shoot at you, too.

The Supernova may or may not approach. If it does, deal with it in the same way as the Atlas.

The Mad Cat is likely to stay near the base for a while. If that happens, you have to advance. Do so cautiously, and only after destroying all other 'Mechs and turrets in the vicinity.

Figure 6-11. You may have to get quite close to the pirate base before the Mad Cat starts moving.

TIP

You may or may not be able to retreat, repair at the MFBs, and then return to finish off the Mad Cat. Ideally, you should still be in fairly good condition, so you won't have to try it.

The Mad Cat contains Suzie Ryan, the pirate leader. Have your lancemates attack her, and hang back slightly as you fight. Be sure to keep moving. She's a very good shot, and she'll tend to concentrate on *you*.

When the Mad Cat has fallen, approach the pirate base at Point Baker. Notice the bridge that leads to a small doorway. Start firing lasers into that doorway; your lancemates will help. After you've done substantial damage to the pirate base, it crumbles. Your mission is a success.

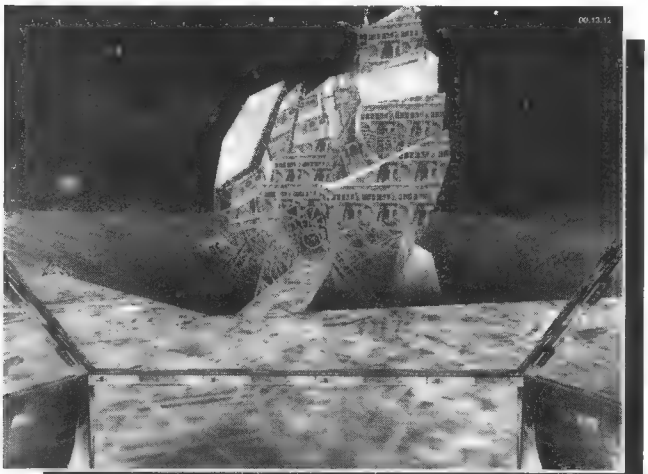
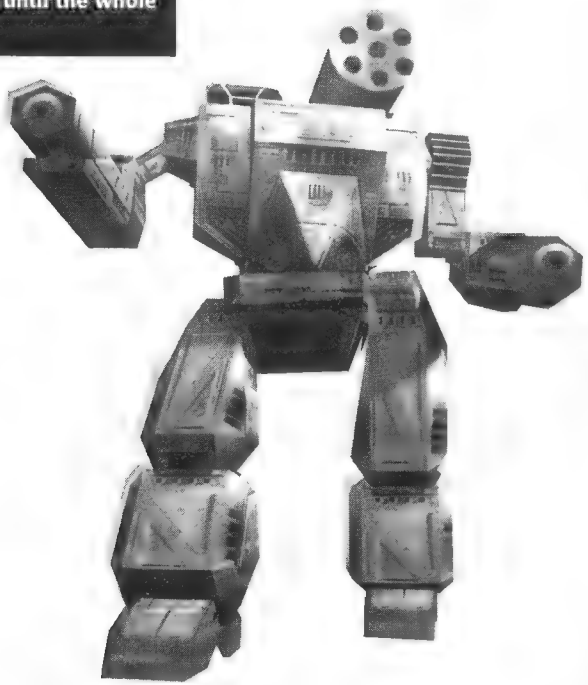
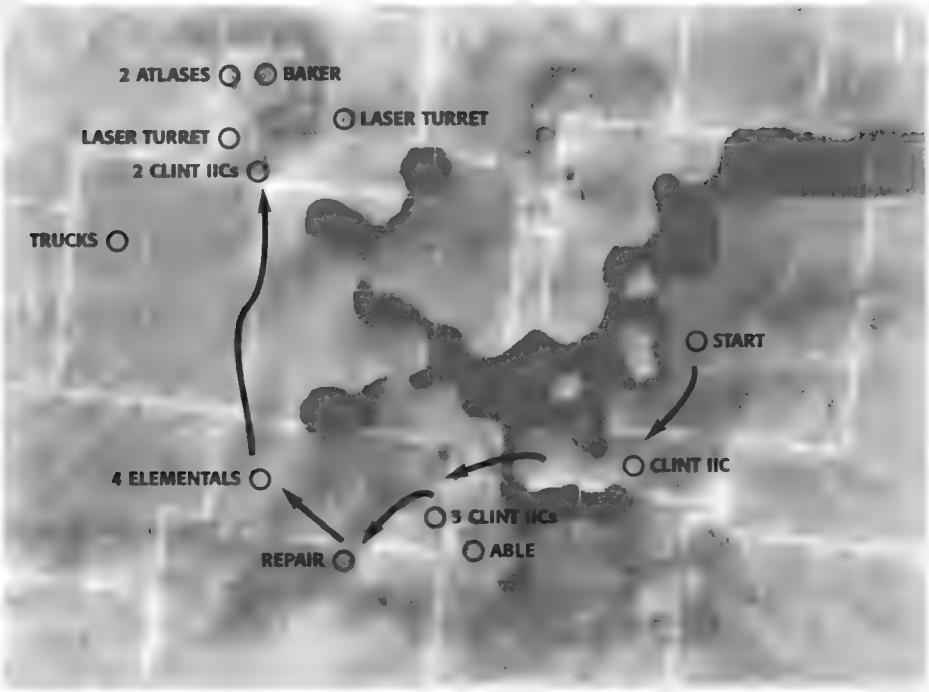


Figure 6-12. Shoot through the doorway until the whole base collapses.



MISSION 6



In this mission, your first task is to defeat a small contingent of fleeing pirate 'Mechs at Point Able. Your second task is to escort several trucks with a valuable Germanium payload to Point Baker. You also need to eliminate any resistance you encounter at Point Baker.

This mission requires full-bore combat skills rather than clever tactics. Proper 'Mechs and weapon payloads should help you win with relative ease. You do, however, need to exercise caution against the pair of Atlases that appear at the mission's end.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Defeat fleeing pirates at Point Able (Primary)**
- **Protect Germanium trucks at Point Baker (Primary)**
- **Defeat 'Mechs at landing pad near Point Baker (Primary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Take the biggest 'Mechs you've got; this may include Atlases by now. If you have Atlases, you might want to give them slightly oversized engines so that they aren't as sluggish as the default model.

Make sure that all your 'Mechs have the maximum payload of jump jets.

As usual, outfit your lancemates with Clan ER Large Lasers or Clan ER PPCs, so that they can deal severe damage from long range. Outfit your own heavy 'Mech with perhaps two Clan ER Large Lasers, but mainly with Clan ER Medium Lasers. We recommend a group of 10 Clan ER Medium Lasers, plus at least 10 extra Clan Double heat sinks.

Your enemies include the following:

- 4 Donar helicopters
- 6 Clint IICs
- 4 Elementals
- 2 Laser Turrets
- 2 Atlases

STRATEGY

Immediately proceed south along the path indicated on the Battle Map. As you proceed toward Point Able, Donar helicopters may occasionally appear in the sky. Target them, and your lancemates will gun them down.

As you continue, a Clint IIC appears in your path. As you run toward it, three more Clint IICs appear near Point Able. Proceed toward the enemy, ordering your lancemates forward to attack. If you start to get hurt, retreat somewhat while your lancemates attack, and lend fire support from behind your lancemates. If your 'Mech holds up well, however, you can jump across the chasm and attack the Clint IICs at close range.

Figure 6-13. Fight the Clint IICs. They should fall quickly before your potent weapons.

A couple more Donar helicopters will harass you as you fight. Concentrate on the Clint IICs first, then the Donars; the Clints can deal much more damage.

When these foes are gone, summon your MFBs to the spot on the Battle Map labeled "Repair." Repair all your 'Mechs thoroughly before proceeding north along the indicated path.

Figure 6-14. Summon your MFBs to the repair point near this ruined structure.

As you proceed northwest, a group of four Elementals will power up. Destroy these Elementals with quick laser bursts. If you have good aim, you should be able to destroy them without taking much collateral damage.

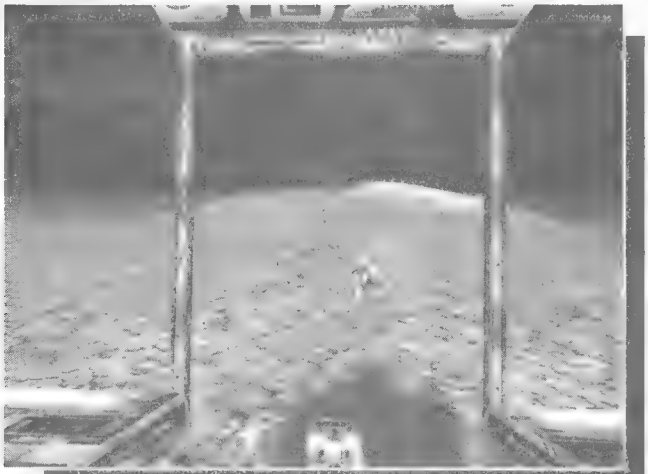


Figure 6-15. If they weren't shooting at you, these little Elementals would almost be cute.

Continue north along the indicated path. As you proceed, you notice a convoy of several trucks heading north. Note them, but don't attack them!

Eventually you notice a pair of Laser Turrets and a pair of Clint IICs to the north. Take out the Laser Turret that isn't blocked by a ridge, and then take apart both Clint IICs. Then resume your trek toward Point Baker and take out the second Laser Turret.

As you approach Point Baker, two Atlases power up amidst the ruins of a dome. The Atlases theoretically could attack the trucks, but they tend to focus on you instead, so you don't have to worry about distracting them.

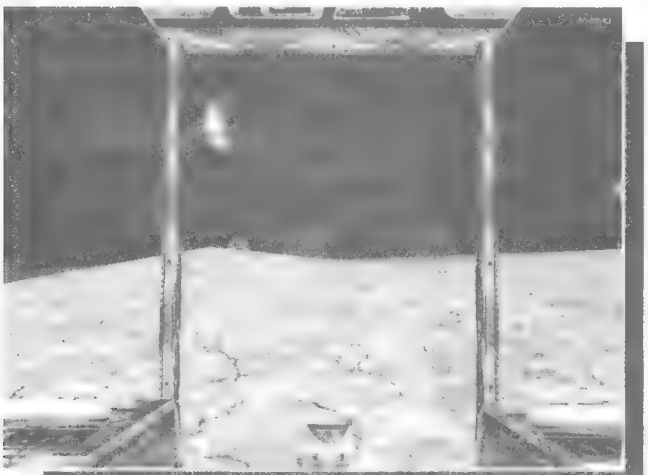


Figure 6-16. When you get in sight of these monolithic shards, the Atlases will power up. Try to stay well away.

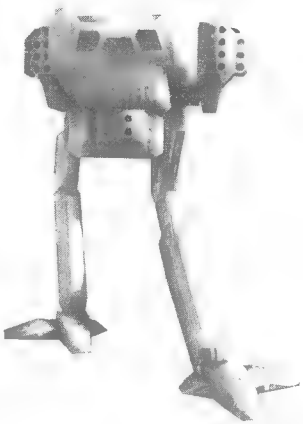
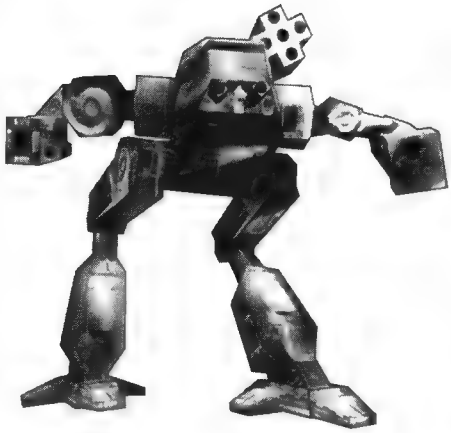


Figure 6-17. Don't get as close to an Atlas as the pilot in this screenshot.

We recommend staying well away from the Atlases as you fight—ideally, between 450 to 600 meters. Stay in motion at all times, have your lancemates attack. If necessary, use the ridge to the southeast of Point Baker for cover. Also, be sure to target a leg of each Atlas; they'll go down faster than if you target the torso.

When both Atlases are gone, you'll have completed all the mission objectives.

Figure 6-18. When the Atlases are gone and the convoy trucks are safely parked at Point Baker, the mission is a success.

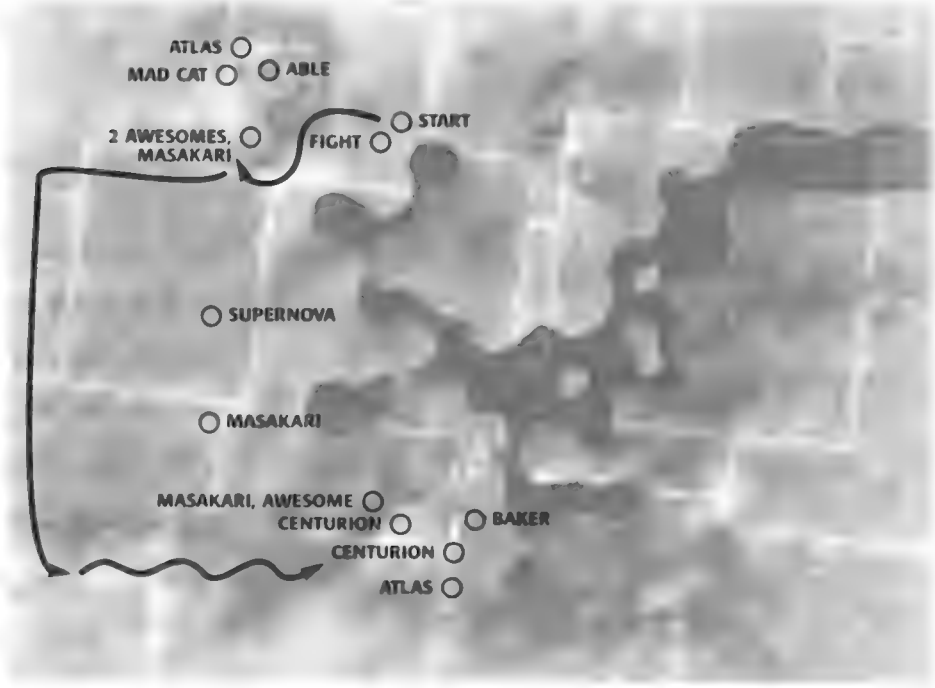


CHAPTER 7
CAMPAIGN, MISSIONS 7–10

THE LAST MISSIONS are extremely difficult. The pirates are fierce and numerous, and at higher difficulty levels, a skillful foe can level your 'Mech with a single barrage to the head. You need to use all the skills you've developed to this point just to survive.

We consider Missions 7 and 10 the hardest, so don't despair if they seem impossible. Either scale back the difficulty for these missions or just keep trying. Every mission *can* be won on High difficulty with the strategies presented here—but you must execute those strategies skillfully.

MISSION 7



Your objectives in this mission are to escape the landing area at Point Able and clear the enemies out of Point Baker. In simple terms, this means destroying all enemy 'Mechs on the map.

This mission is the toughest you've dealt with so far. Also, it's arguably the toughest mission in the entire campaign. You need both skill and a little luck to win, especially at the harder difficulty levels.

The keys to winning this mission are patience and a careful approach. You need the patience to keep repairing your 'Mechs, and you need to approach your enemies carefully, to minimize the number of clean shots that they get at you and your lancemates.

Your objectives include the following:

- Escape pirate landing area at Point Able (Primary)
- Clear away rendezvous point at Point Baker (Primary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This is a very difficult mission that you may have to try several times, especially if you're playing at the highest difficulty level. Even with the help of this walk-through, you need to perform at a very high skill level to succeed.

Take your heaviest 'Mechs on this mission. As usual, load up your lancemates with Clan ER Large Lasers. Take two or three of those weapons yourself, plus a large group of Clan ER Medium Lasers. Lots of AMS are crucial.

In this mission, it's important not to charge into enemy territory whenever a new enemy appears. Stay back, using the cover of a ridge if possible, and let the enemy come to you. Blast the enemy as soon as you have a line of sight, then assess your damage level and decide whether to go back for repairs. Never run into new territory during combat, as this just unleashes a horde of new enemies.

It's also key to stay well back from the enemy, even if you're using cover. If you're hiding behind a ridge, for example, you should stay well back from the ridge and keep moving back and forth. Otherwise, if you're standing near the base of the ridge and not moving, the enemy will get a perfect shot at your head the instant he crests the ridge.

Your enemies include the following:

- 3 Awesomes
- 2 Masakaris
- 2 Atlases
- 1 Mad Cat
- 1 Supernova
- 2 Centurions

STRATEGY

Your forces start near Point Able. Immediately begin moving due west from your starting point.

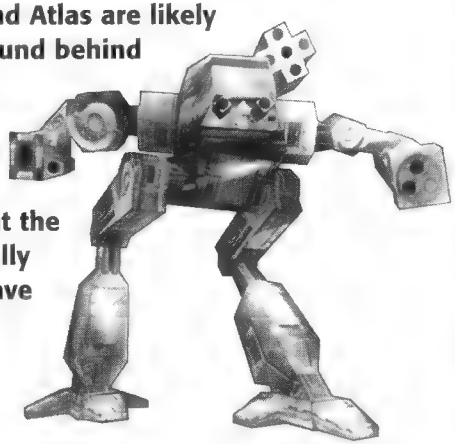
As you reach the spot labeled "Fight," several pirate 'Mechs power up behind the ridge near Point Able. These include two Awesomes, a Masakari, a Mad Cat, and an Atlas.

Remain in the area labeled "Fight." Run around in this area (don't go too far), and keep firing at the nearest enemy. Your lancemates will help; you should order them to attack specific targets if they aren't being helpful. Use your large group of lasers (as described in the Intelligence Briefing) to mow down enemies quickly.

Figure 7-1. Take down enemies from medium range. Use a large group of Clan ER Medium Lasers.

Fortunately for you, the Atlas and Mad Cat tend to remain behind the ridge that hides Point Able. Therefore, if you stick close to the spot labeled "Fight," not venturing too far up or around the ridge, you should only have to fight the two Awesomes and the Masakari right now.

When the Awesomes and Masakari are gone, the Mad Cat and Atlas are likely to still be milling around behind the ridge. If so, have your most damaged 'Mechs repaired in the nearby MFBs. (There's a chance that the Mad Cat will eventually attack. If so, you'll have to deal with it, too, before repairs.)



TIP

You'll do best if you use the ridge to block some of your foes from sight (so they can't shoot at you), but always keep one or two of them visible. You can't hide *too* much, because if you do, the enemy will attack your MFBs. You'll have to make yourself visible frequently enough to distract them from destroying the MFBs.

Figure 7-2. Attack the Mad Cat from a distance, so you don't have to worry about the Atlas at the same time.

When repairs are completed, approach Point Able along the path drawn on the Battle Map. By going just a little way around the ridge, you should be able to reveal the Mad Cat but not the Atlas. Concentrate on destroying the Mad Cat, then move farther toward Point Baker and take out the Atlas. Be sure not to stand still when you attack the Atlas, and let your lancemates go in a moment ahead of you. Also, try to stay at least 300 meters away from the Atlas at all times. At shorter distances, a single Autocannon blast can easily take off your 'Mech's head and end the mission.

Figure 7-3. The Atlas likes to hide behind these triangular walls. Stay well back instead of charging in for the kill.

After destroying all opposition near Point Able, repair your 'Mechs and follow the path indicated on the Battle Map. This path takes you west and then south along the extreme western edge of the combat area.

Eventually you reach a big ridge that runs along the southern edge of the map.

When you reach this ridge, you should slowly start heading east. Move along the edge of the ridge, using parts of it to shield yourself from potential enemies to the east. This is key; you'll want to move from the shelter of one hill or ridge to the next, never staying out of cover for too long.

TIP

If you don't get far enough west, a Supernova will attack from the east. Destroy it with long-range fire and continue.

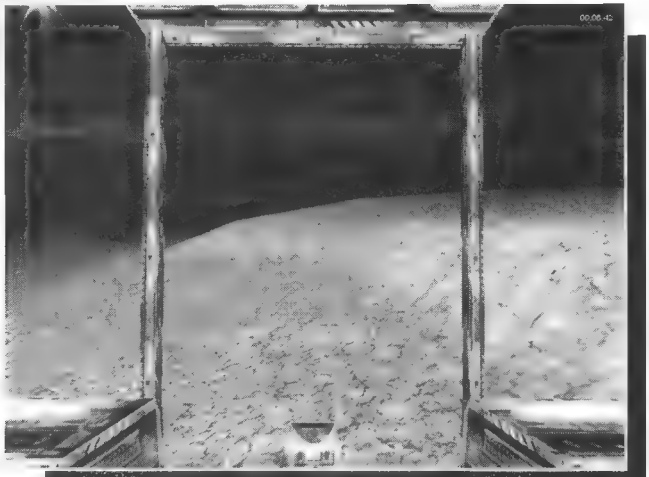


Figure 7-4. Run from the cover of one ridge to another.

TIP

You may encounter 'Mechs in a slightly different order than we mention them in this walkthrough, or at different times than we mention them. That's because it's very easy to get too close to enemy 'Mechs and trigger them before you're ready for them.

Regardless of when you encounter the enemy, the main points to keep in mind are: use the ridges for cover whenever possible, don't run out to meet the enemy (which just triggers extra enemies, and overwhelms you), and keep moving even when you're hiding behind a ridge. Stay behind cover, and order your lancemates to attack only when the enemy starts to penetrate that cover.

As you move east, a Masakari appears to the northeast. Your cover won't work so well against the Masakari, because it's too far north. Just target it and take it apart with your Clan Large ER Lasers. Let your lancemates do the same; don't actually order them toward it. Also, don't advance on the enemy, or you might stir up more of them.

When the Masakari's down, you'll either want to go back for repairs or proceed farther east, depending on your 'Mechs' condition. If you want repairs, the safest way is to backtrack along the exact path by which you arrived, and repair at your initial starting point. That's a long and tedious route—but it's safer than visiting the southern MFB points.

Assuming that your 'Mechs are in good shape, continue east along the ridge, moving in and out of cover. If you didn't encounter a Supernova earlier, it will now appear to the northeast. Start firing from long range, from the cover of a ridge. The cover won't protect you from the Supernova, but it *will* protect you from the Masakari and Awesome that are likely to move in from the east while you're shooting the Supernova.

After the Supernova has fallen, retreat somewhat from the ridge you're hiding behind. When either the Masakari or the Awesome appears on the ridge, order your lancemates to attack it and then start running laterally. Destroy it with concentrated fire. Repeat this process when the second enemy approaches.

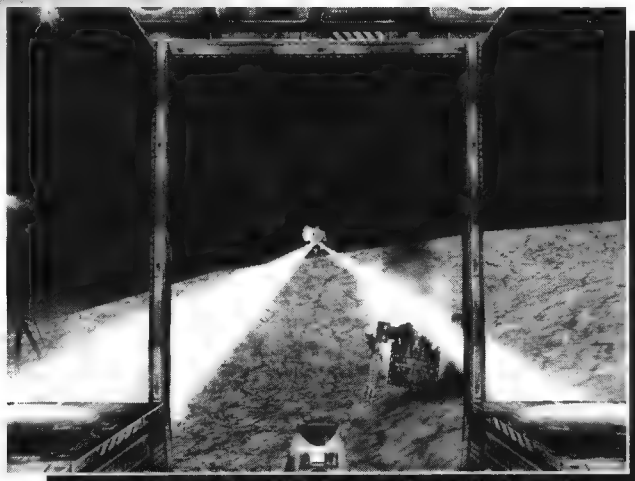


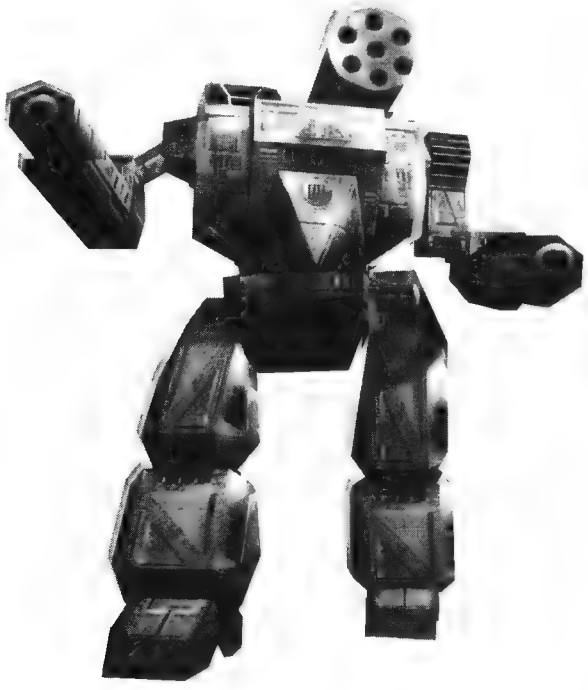
Figure 7-5. You shouldn't be standing still when the enemy crests the ridge. Try to stay well back, and keep moving laterally.

Shortly after the Masakari and Awesome, a Centurion approaches from the east. Destroy it in the same way.

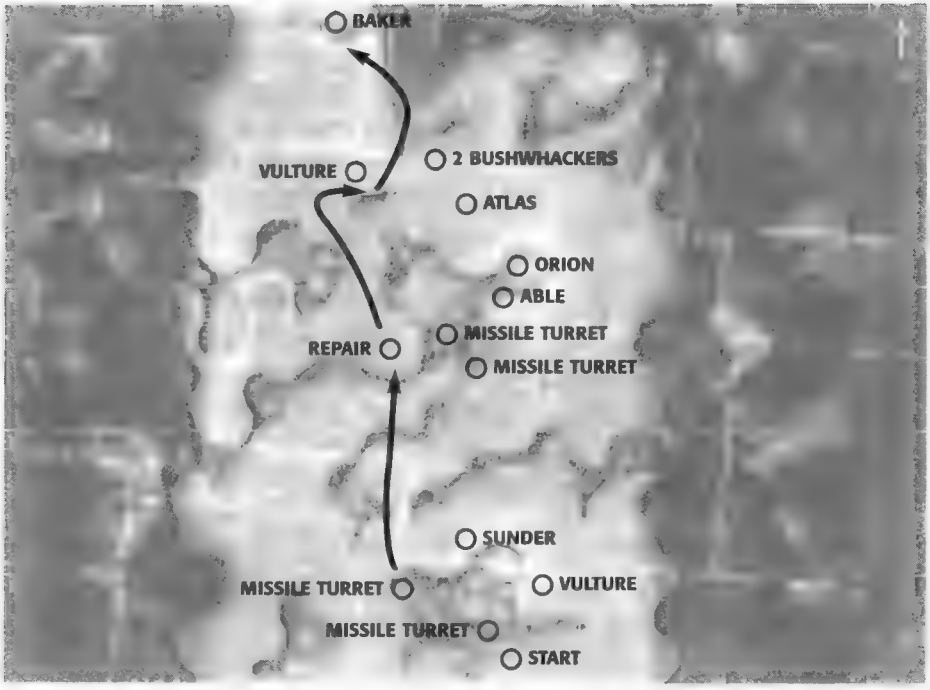
When no more enemies are coming, it might be a good time to carefully retreat all the way to your starting point and repair. Again, make sure to backtrack along the western edge of the map. (This can be a pain, but it's worth it if your 'Mechs are seriously damaged.)

When repairs are completed, return here and proceed farther east. As you approach Point Baker, an Atlas and another Centurion appear. As before, use a ridge to hide, then order your lancemates to attack as soon as the enemies crest the ridge you're hiding behind.

When these foes are destroyed, the mission is a success.



MISSION 8



This mission requires you to escort a convoy to Point Baker. The combat in this mission isn't as brutal as in the last one, but the fact that the convoy never stops to give you a break introduces new difficulties. You have to fight quickly and move quickly to stay ahead of the convoy trucks.

Only after the convoy has been safely escorted to Point Baker should you concern yourself with the secondary mission objectives. Your objectives are as follows:

- **Escort convoy to portal base at Point Baker (Primary)**
- **Destroy camp and defenses at Point Able (Secondary)**
- **Eliminate all enemy 'Mechs (Secondary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

As usual, we recommend taking along your biggest 'Mechs, a few Clan ER Large Lasers, and lots of Clan ER Medium Lasers. Speedy 'Mechs aren't necessary if you keep up a brisk pace within the mission itself. However, if you have Atlases, you may want to speed them up somewhat from their default configurations.

This mission takes place on watery terrain, so you should fight from the water whenever possible to take advantage of the cooling effects.

Your enemies include:

- 4 Missile Turrets
- 1 Sunder
- 2 Vultures
- 1 Orion
- 1 Atlas
- 2 Bushwhackers

STRATEGY

You start the mission slightly off the southern edge of the map. Nearby are the convoy trucks that you must protect as they drive north to Point Baker.

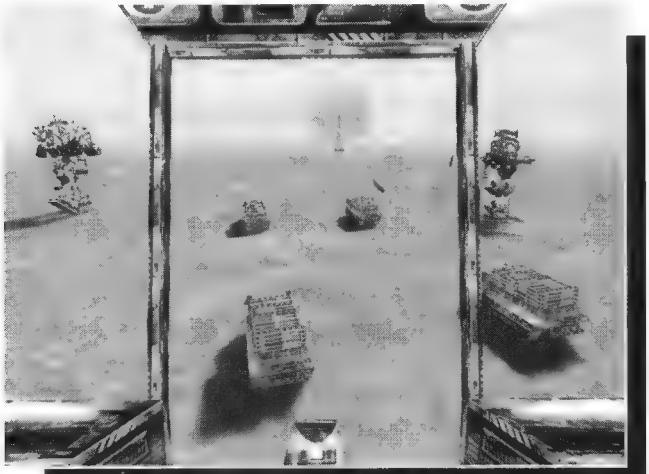


Figure 7-6. You must protect these trucks.

Immediately head north. You see a pair of Missile Turrets somewhat to the north; destroy both from long range with Clan ER Large Lasers.

Next, a Sunder appears to the north, followed by a Vulture. Send your lancemates ahead to attack, and take out both foes. As you fight, be sure to give your lancemates time to get ahead of you, because they may get tangled up with the convoy. Also, remember that you can use the ridges to the north to shield yourself from one enemy while you battle the other.

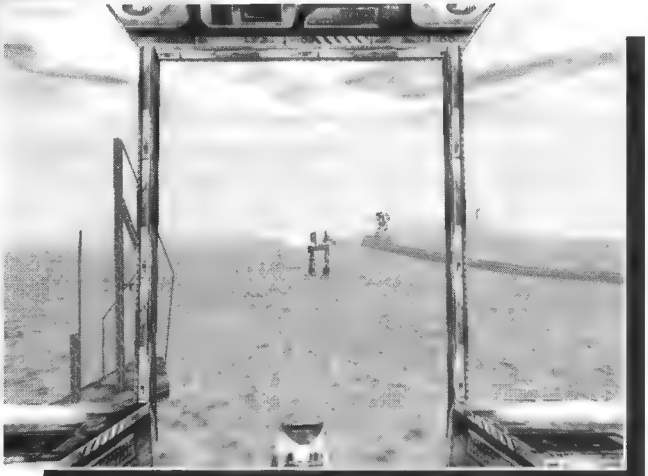


Figure 7-7. Take out the Sunder and Vulture as quickly as possible.

When one of the two enemy 'Mechs is down, order your MFBs to start moving toward the repair spot. When the second goes down and the coast is clear, proceed north at full speed, following the path drawn on the Battle Map.

As you move north toward the repair spot, you see another pair of Missile Turrets to the north. Again, take out both with long-range Clan ER Large Laser fire. Don't stop moving.

When you get very close to the repair spot, an Orion appears near Point Able. Just keep moving until you get to the patch of water labeled "Repair." Run back and forth in this patch of water, gunning at the Orion as you move. An Atlas powers up to the northeast as you do this.

Hopefully you'll gun down the Orion before the Atlas comes into view. Take out the Atlas in the same way, running back and forth in the water (to keep cool) and letting the Atlas have it with your medium-range weapons. You may want to have your lancemates charge in and attack, too.

Figure 7-8. Attack the Atlas from the water.

When the Atlas goes down, you should have time to quickly repair your own 'Mech—but not those of your lancemates—and then continue following the path on the Battle Map. It's crucial not to let the convoy get ahead of you, so you should only repair your most damaged 'Mech—which is typically yours.

Figure 7-9. You only have time to repair one 'Mech—and that's under ideal circumstances.

TIP

If the convoy is getting too far ahead of you, you shouldn't repair *any* 'Mechs. Just try to get ahead of them and hope for the best.

As you approach a bridge, a Vulture and a pair of Bushwhackers power up nearby. Blast the Vulture from the water, then quickly go after the Bushwhackers. You may have to leave the water to attack the Bushwhackers; that's okay. The main thing is to engage the Bushwhackers in combat quickly, before they get a chance to destroy the convoy.

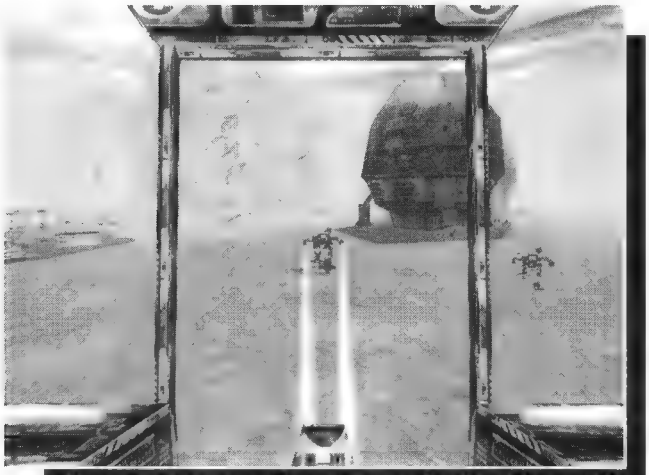


Figure 7-10. You may have to go on land to take out the Bushwhackers quickly.

TIP

If the convoy is taking heavy damage, don't try to destroy the enemy 'Mechs one after the other. Instead, attack all three of them to distract their attention from the convoy, and *then* concentrate on destroying them.

When these three 'Mechs are destroyed, the remains of the convoy enters the base at Point Baker and the mission is a success.

To complete your secondary mission objectives, return to Point Able. You need to flatten the base there. The main thing is to destroy a tunnel entrance by shooting the rocks above it, causing them to collapse. Bring your lancemates along; even if you're unsure what to attack, *they* know what to shoot.

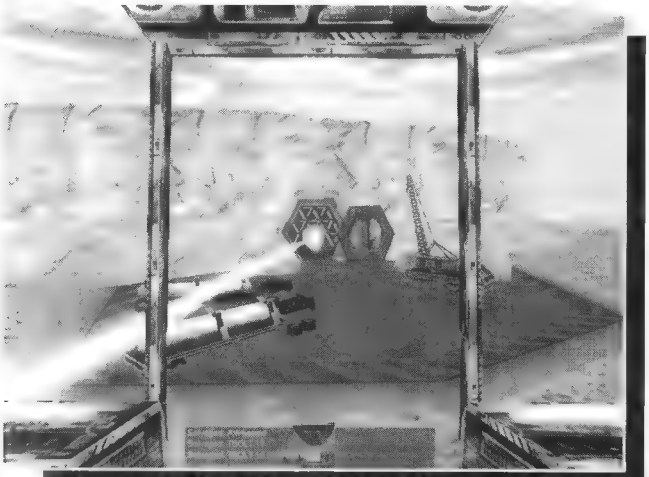
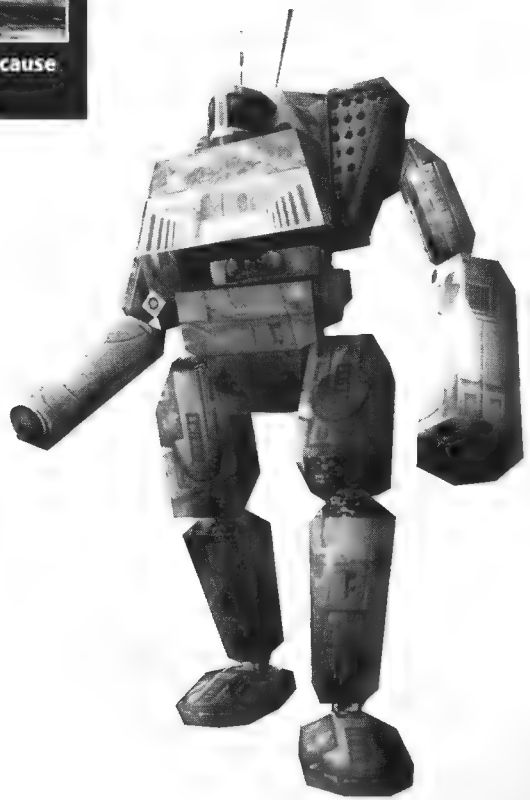
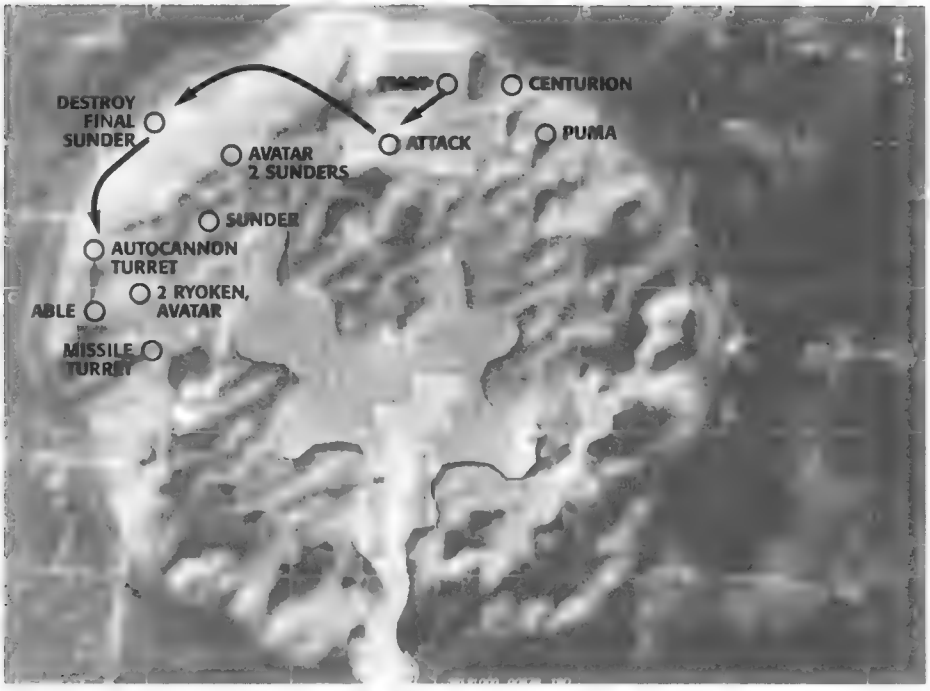


Figure 7-11. Shoot above this tunnel entrance to cause rocks to collapse, thus blocking it.

When the base at Point Able is destroyed, all your objectives are complete.



MISSION 9



The objective of this mission is to defend the friendly base at your starting point, then destroy a pirate base at Point Able. This mission is easiest if you split up your lancemates. You can win the mission without separating them, but it's hard to defend the base from all angles if your forces are clustered together.

When the threat to the friendly base is gone, you're tasked with attacking the pirate base. The pirate base is quite well guarded, but it'll fall to a methodical attack.

- **Protect allied base at Point Start (Primary)**
- **Destroy base and defenses at Point Able (Primary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

As usual, take large 'Mechs, about three Clan ER Large Lasers, and a large group (maybe nine or ten) of Clan ER Medium Lasers. Outfit your lancemates primarily with Clan ER Large Lasers.

Also as usual, load up on AMS, and speed up any Atlases slightly from their default configuration.

There are two main segments of this mission: the defense of the base at Point Start and the attack on Point Alpha. The main concern in the defense portion is that your base's two warehouses might be destroyed. The main threat in the attack portion is succumbing to enemy fire. If you follow our instructions, though, you shouldn't have great difficulty with either portion—except on High difficulty, where the attack requires good combat skills.

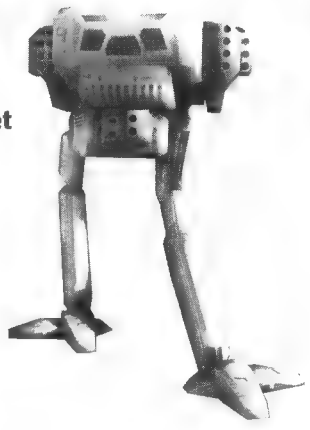
Your enemies include:

- 4 Sunders
- 2 Avatars
- 1 Puma
- 1 Centurion
- 2 Ryoken
- 1 Autocannon Turret
- 1 Missile Turret

STRATEGY

Your forces start out at the base they must defend. Immediately target the closest of two nearby warehouses.

With the warehouse targeted, assign one lancemate in a heavy, durable 'Mech to protect it by using the Defend My Target command.



TIP

You can target the warehouse by pointing at it as if you were going to fire at it, then using the Target Object Under Reticule command. If you're unsure what you've mapped that command to, press ESC and enter the Options menu, and then look at your control setup.

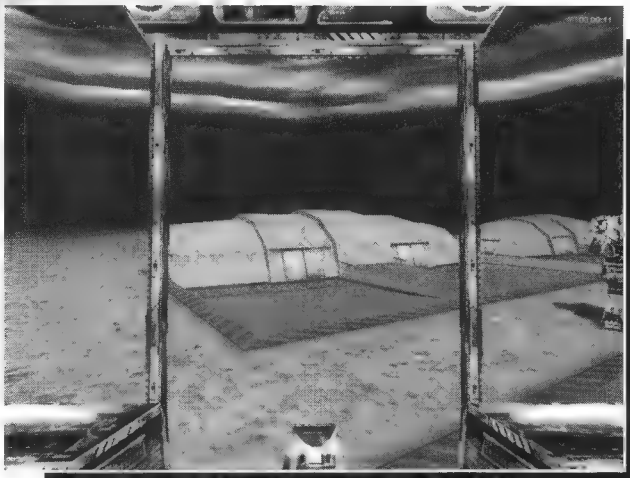


Figure 7-12. Order a lancemate to defend this warehouse.

Now take your other two lancemates and proceed slightly southwest, to the spot labeled "Attack" on the Battle Map. This is a ridge that gives a good view of the land to the southwest. Don't go much farther than this area; stay right here!

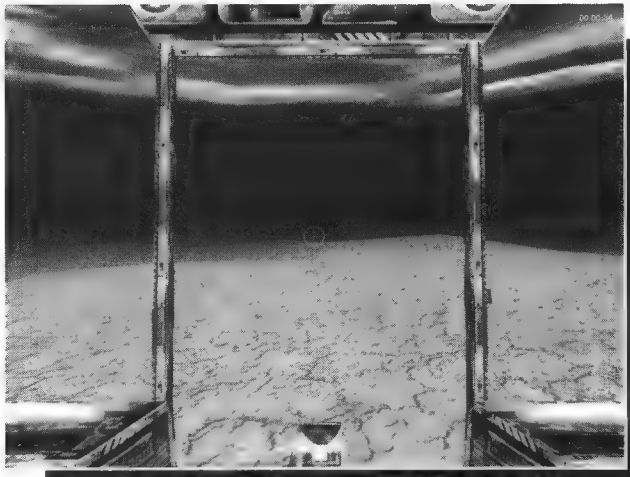


Figure 7-13. You won't see much at first, but stick around. The enemy will come to you.

Soon, a procession of pirate 'Mechs appears from the southwest. These include two Sunders and an Avatar. Stay near the spot labeled "Attack" instead of running out to greet them; try to take them down quickly. You may send your lancemates out to attack (except for the lancemate guarding the warehouse, of course) but you personally should stay near the attack area.

While you're busy fighting these forces, some traitorous Lyrans attack the base you're supposed to be defending. These sneak attackers include a Centurion and a Puma, and they approach from the east. The lancemate that you assigned to defend the warehouse should distract them until you finish off the Sunders and Avatar, at which point you should turn around and run back toward the warehouses, attacking the Centurion and Puma.

TIP

The two warehouses are the only structures that must be defended. If both of these are destroyed, the mission is a failure. If this happens, try again, and this time try to eliminate the Sunders and Avatar faster, so you can get back to the warehouses faster and help with defense.

You can also try to assign *two* lancemates to defend the warehouses, instead of just one.

When all visible attackers are gone, repair all 'Mechs near your starting point. Then take all your lancemates and proceed west toward the spot labeled "Destroy Final Sunder." As you approach this spot, you see an Autocannon Turret near Point Able, which you can destroy with long-range fire. You also see a Sunder, and possibly a Ryoken or two.

When the Sunder comes into view, back up somewhat, in the direction of the base at your initial starting point. The Sunder moves toward your base and tries to attack it, but you can easily gun it down with long-range fire before it gets there. The other pirate 'Mechs near Point Able won't leave the vicinity of Point Able, so by backing up you'll be able to fight the Sunder without any interference from the others.

If any 'Mechs need repair after destroying the Sunder, repair them. Otherwise, keep following the path on the Battle Map, moving toward Point Able.

As you approach Point Able, several 'Mechs appear. These include another Sunder, two Ryoken, and an Avatar. Depending on your preferences, you should either order your lancemates in for the attack and follow them, or retreat slightly and try to lure out the 'Mechs one by one as you use a ridge for cover. Finish off the enemies with medium-range weapons.

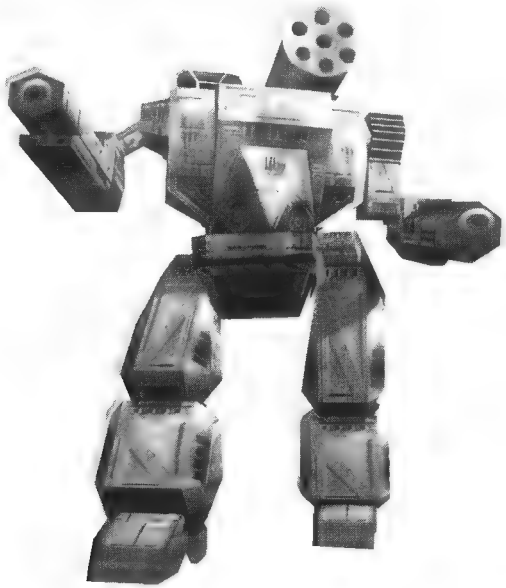


Figure 7-14. We recommend hanging back behind a ridge and attacking enemies as they crest the ridge. This strategy prevents all enemies from attacking you at once.

After these 'Mechs are destroyed, approach Point Able. Your lancemates automatically destroy several warehouses there, and the mission ends in success.

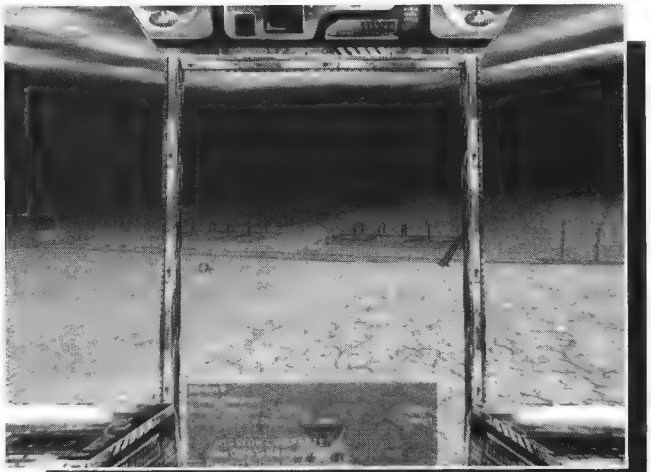
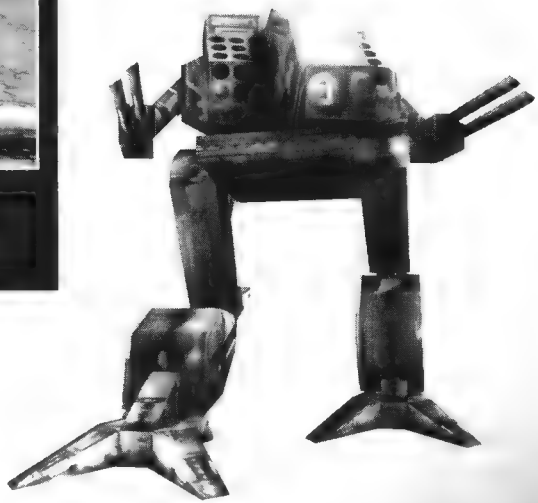
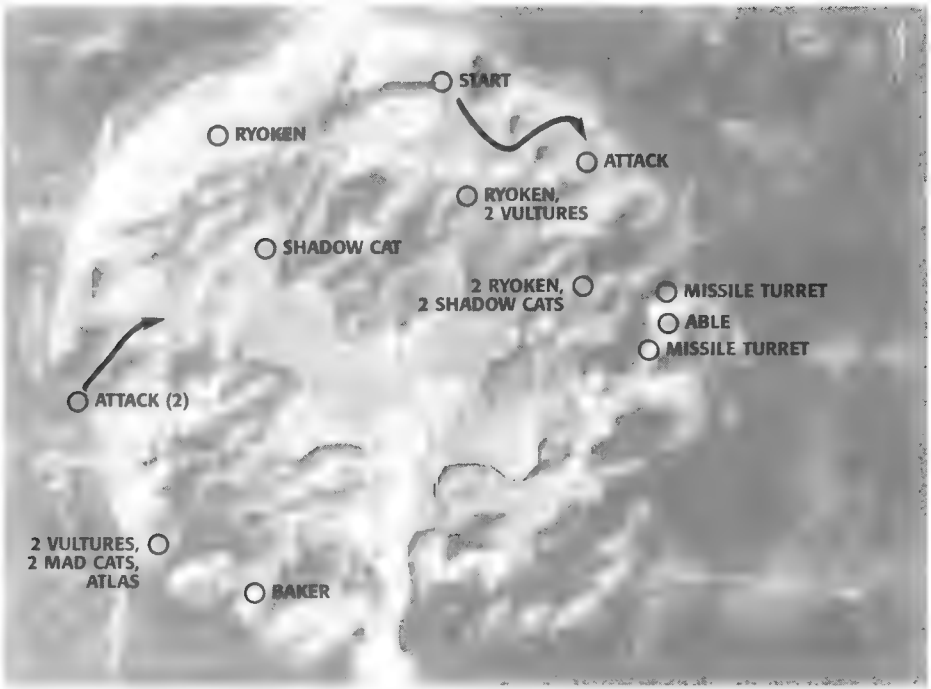


Figure 7-15. When the warehouses at Point Able have been reduced to mere skeletons, the mission is a success.



MISSION 10



The final mission requires you to protect the same allied base that you protected in Mission 9, plus destroy two pirate camps. The pirate camps are very well-defended—especially the one at Point Baker, which features extremely heavy and well-piloted 'Mechs.

Along with Mission 7, this is the toughest pure combat mission you face. As usual with these missions, the key is to strike a balance between killing the enemy yourself and letting your lancemates do the work. You need everything your lancemates can give you on this mission.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Protect allied base at Point Start (Primary)**
- **Destroy pirate camp at Point Able (Primary)**
- **Destroy pirate camp at Point Baker (Primary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This mission is very difficult if you approach it with a gung-ho mentality. You need to use cover and your lancemates effectively if you want to succeed. Even then, you may have to try it several times, especially when playing on the higher difficulty levels.

A deadly green river originates at the southern edge of the map and flows into the center. Walking into this tainted water means instant destruction. Our battle plan keeps you well away from this water, but you should know the risks anyway.

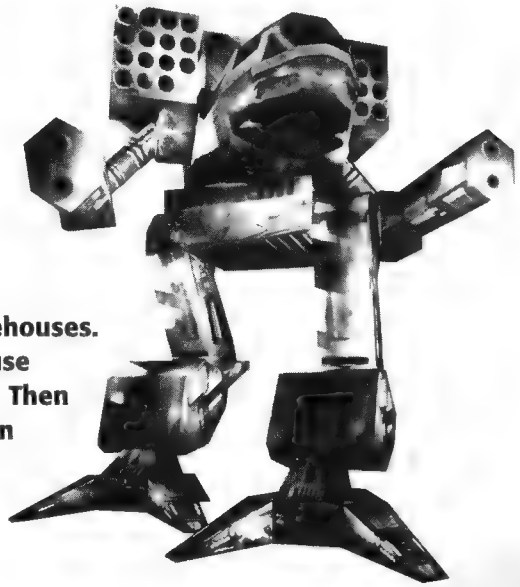
As always, bring your heaviest 'Mechs. Load Clan ER Large Lasers almost exclusively on your lancemates' 'Mechs. Bring two of those big lasers along for yourself, too, along with a battery of about nine or ten Clan ER Medium Lasers. Make sure that all your 'Mechs have multiple AMS (ideally, four or five apiece).

Our strategy for this mission is to place your lancemates on ridges where they can use their long-range laser weapons, then for you to sneak behind them and drop behind the ridge for cover whenever necessary. Ordering your lancemates to hold their position is crucial to making this work, because it forces them to stay in place and return fire rather than concentrating on following you.

Losing a 'Mech in the final battle of this mission is perfectly acceptable, but you should try your hardest not to lose any lancemates before that final battle. You need all the help you can get when you approach Point Baker.

Your enemies include the following:

- 4 Ryoken
- 4 Vultures
- 3 Shadow Cats
- 4 Missile Turrets
- 2 Mad Cats
- 1 Atlas



STRATEGY

Your forces start out near a pair of warehouses. Immediately target the nearest warehouse and assign two lancemates to defend it. Then target the farthest warehouse and assign your remaining lancemate to defend it.

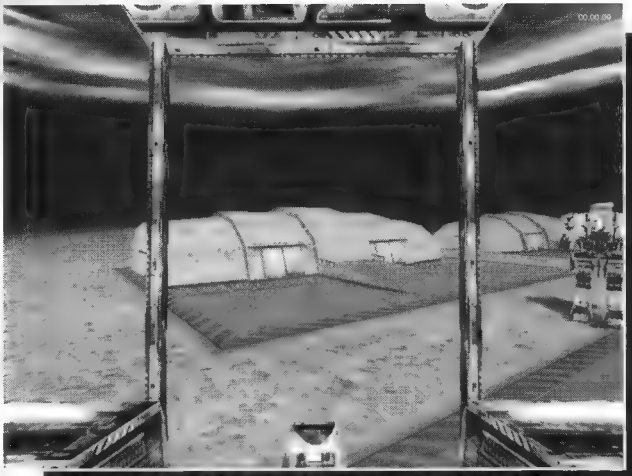


Figure 7-16. Order your lancemates to defend these warehouses.

Now proceed slightly southeast and watch the radar for incoming enemies. Destroy the closest, easiest targets as soon as they appear. Your lancemates meanwhile will select their own targets.

A Ryoken and two Vultures approach from the southeast; a Shadow Cat and another Ryoken sneak in from the southwest. You'll probably do best to attack the southwestern attackers, as they're most likely to slip past your lancemates.

When these attackers are destroyed and the base is quiet, fully repair all your 'Mechs at the starting point.

When repairs are done, collect your 'Mechs and lead them due east to the spot labeled "Attack." As they reach this spot they see two Missile Turrets near Point Able. You also notice a pair of Ryoken powering up. Destroy the Missile Turrets with long-range weapons and walk to the top of a ridge. Fire at the Ryoken to get their attention, then order your lancemates to hold their ground. (Make sure that they're atop the ridge before giving the order; it's important that they can see the enemy.) Pop in and out of the cover of the ridge, firing shots at the Ryoken. Your lancemates automatically attack the enemy with their long-range lasers.

When both Ryoken are gone, a pair of Shadow Cats appears in the same area. Deal with them in the same way as the Ryoken, popping in and out of the cover of the ridge while your lancemates hammer them from long range.

When these foes are dead, approach Point Able. Fire multiple laser shots into the structure at the center of the pirate base there. You need to blast away the outer part of the structure, then place several shots into the core. Eventually it'll be destroyed.

TIP

Be sure to distract the Ryoken. They have ER PPCs, so they *can* damage the warehouses at your starting point, even from here. If they do that, you might lose the mission.

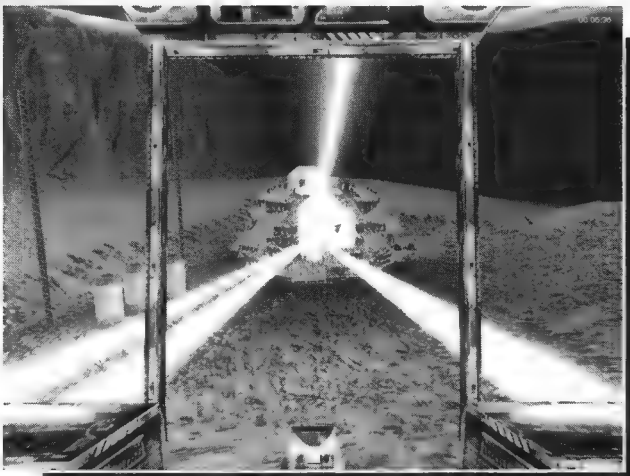


Figure 7-17,. Blast the structure at Point Able repeatedly. Eventually it'll be destroyed.

Gather your lancemates, return to your starting point, and fully repair all your 'Mechs.

When your 'Mechs are repaired, proceed southwest along the path indicated on the Battle Map. Move to the spot labeled "Attack (2)." From here, the pirate base at Point Baker should be more or less in range.

TIP

If you lose a lancemate, you'll have a hard time completing the mission. You can try—but we recommend starting over, this time trying to keep all of your lancemates alive for the final showdown.

Figure 7-18. The spot labeled "Attack (2)" lies slightly beyond this mining rig.

At "Attack (2)," you'll find a very steep ridge. Get to the top of this ridge, and make absolutely sure that all your lancemates are at the top, too. They need to be up there to see the enemy; if you leave them at the bottom of the ridge, they don't have a clear line of sight.

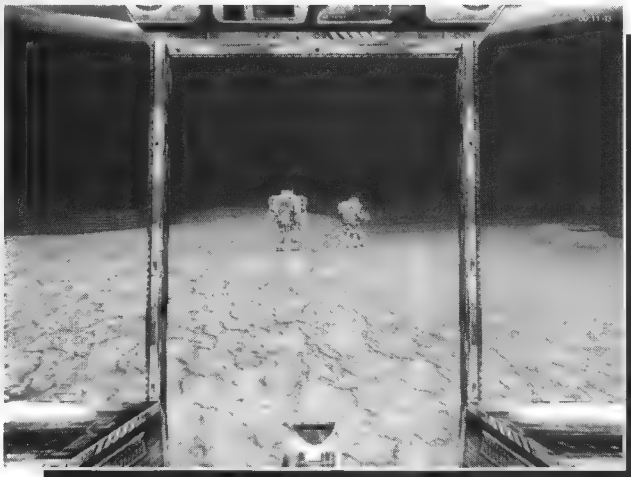


Figure 7-19. Before getting too close to Point Baker, be absolutely sure that your lancemates are up on the ridge with you.

When everyone's assembled atop the ridge at "Attack (2)," slowly creep toward the base at Point Baker. Blast a Missile Turret from long range. As you creep forward, a pair of Vultures power up near Point Baker. Freeze in your tracks and start attacking the Vultures with your Clan ER Large Lasers. Don't approach the Vultures as you shoot. Don't order your lancemates in to attack, either; just let them shoot from where they are. If you're accurate, you won't have to worry about taking much return fire—but you can always order your lancemates to hold their ground and then slip behind them if you're getting abused.

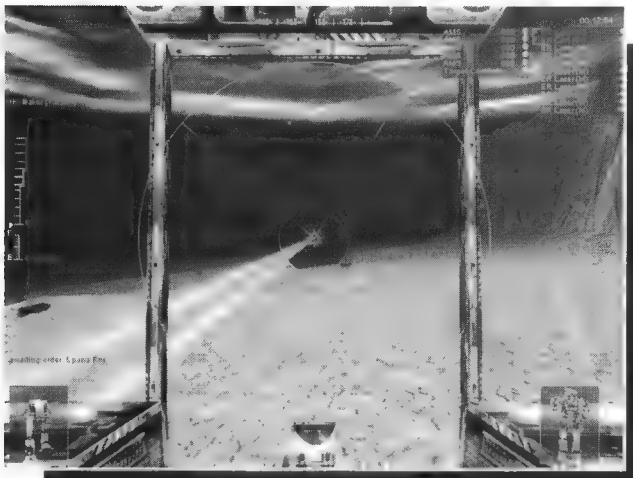


Figure 7-20. Use your Clan ER Large Lasers to pummel the enemy from afar.

Moments after the second Vulture has been destroyed, two Mad Cats power up in the same general area. Continue to fire from this range. Don't approach the Mad Cats. Notice that one of the Mad Cats is moving toward your units, while the second is moving north, toward the base at your initial starting point.

Shortly after the Mad Cats appear, an Atlas appears behind them. This is your cue to act. Order your lancemates to hold their position. They'll stay here and attack the nearest Mad Cat and the Atlas with their long-range weapons. Meanwhile, run northeast, along the path indicated on the Battle Map. Intercept the single Mad Cat that's making a break to the north, toward your base.

Your lancemates have their hands full with the other Mad Cat and Atlas. Some of them may be forced to eject. That's okay; it's even expected. This is the last mission, so ejections are fine.

Track down that Mad Cat, doing everything you can to stay as far away from the Atlas as possible. The Atlas is piloted by Suzie Ryan, and she's very accurate. She wants to attack *you*, not your lancemates, so getting too close to her is deadly. Let your lancemates soften her up as you chase that Mad Cat.

When the Mad Cat is destroyed, hopefully your lancemates will have managed to take down the Atlas and/or the other Mad Cat. If not, cautiously attack the remaining 'Mechs, taking care to stay well back. Give it all you've got, but don't charge in!

TIP

If you're getting pounded by the Atlas, drop behind a ridge for cover as you proceed northeast toward the Mad Cat. You also can order your lancemates to attack the Atlas to distract it.

This is a very tough fight, and an unlucky shot could very well end the mission for you here. The keys are to keep your lancemates up on the ridge (where they can shoot), to catch the lone Mad Cat that tries to go north, and to let your lancemates shoot up the Atlas a good deal before attacking it yourself. It may take several tries, but the battle is indeed winnable. You must let your lancemates do some of the work, though; you can't charge in first and expect to win.

When all the pirate 'Mechs are gone, approach Point Baker and destroy a second Missile Turret. Blast the structure at the center of Point Baker repeatedly. Eventually it's destroyed, and the mission is a success.

Figure 7-21. Destroy the structure at Point Baker, and the campaign is a success.

Congratulations! You've beaten the campaign. Sit back and watch the ending credits.

PART III

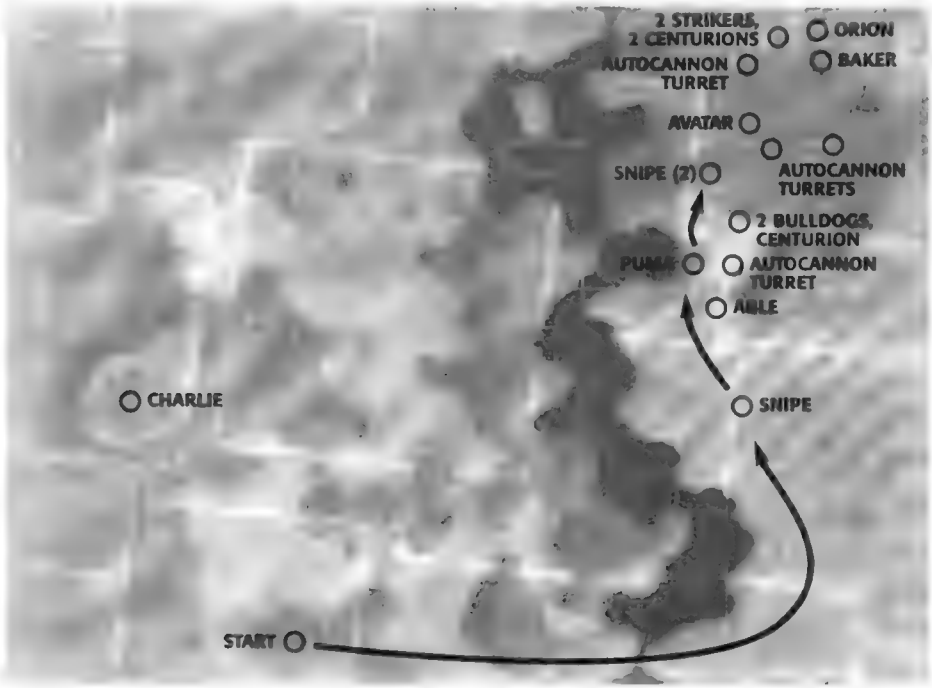
CHAPTER 8
PIRATE MISSIONS 1–3

THE PIRATE MISSIONS follow a logical progression, but they aren't a campaign in the same sense as the standard campaign missions. The main consequence of this is the lack of salvage.

Because your 'Mechs from one mission won't necessarily carry over to the next mission, you don't need to worry as much about losing them. And because you can't salvage enemy 'Mechs for use in the next mission, there's no incentive to try to preserve enemy 'Mechs and thus increase the chance of salvaging them. Also, there's no incentive to fight every single enemy 'Mech on the map. If there were salvage, you might benefit from fighting an extra Atlas or Thor, just on the off chance you might salvage it. In these missions, however, it's usually best just to avoid any foes that can easily be avoided.

These first three missions aren't terribly difficult if you're patient, if you use our strategies, and if you frequently return to your MFBs for repairs.

MISSION 1



In this mission, you must destroy a Federated Suns power supply and a Rim Collective generator. Both targets lie across a large chasm. The obvious path across the chasm is a bridge to the north, but crossing that bridge exposes your 'Mechs to unnecessary fire. We recommend equipping your 'Mechs with jump jets and crossing to the south, where you won't have to worry about being attacked during the crossing.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Destroy Federated Suns power supply at Point Baker (Primary)
- Destroy Rim Collective generator at Point Able (Secondary)
- Return to pirate base at Point Charlie (Final)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Take two Thors and a Centurion. Pack your lancemates' 'Mechs with the longest-range lasers and missiles available. Pack your own 'Mech with at least one Clan ER Large Laser and a big bunch of Clan ER Medium Lasers.

Load all the AMS you can onto your 'Mech. Missiles are quite common amongst your enemies.

Also, be sure that all three of your 'Mechs have jump jets. Our strategy requires a jump across the chasm rather than a bridge crossing.

Your enemies include the following:

- 4 Autocannon Turrets
- 1 Puma
- 2 Bulldogs
- 3 Centurions
- 1 Avatar
- 2 Strikers
- 1 Orion

STRATEGY

Your forces start out in the southwestern part of the map. Instead of proceeding northeast toward the bridge that's the obvious route to your targets, proceed due east along the path drawn on the Battle Map. Jump across the chasm and proceed north to the spot labeled "Snipe."

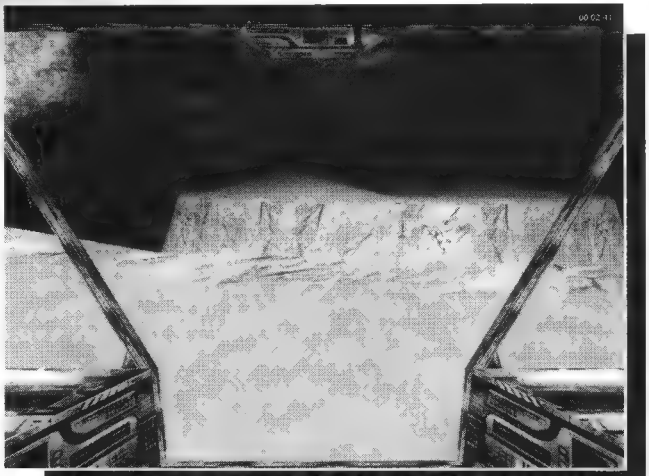


Figure 8-1. Jump across the chasm at the narrowest point.

From the hilly spot labeled "Snipe," you should be able to get a good view of the defenders at the Rim Collective Camp. These include an Autocannon Turret, a Puma, a Centurion, and a pair of Bulldogs. At the spot labeled "Snipe," enter the cover of a hill and then run up and down it, taking shots at any available target whenever you reach the top of the hill. The defenders will be reluctant to chase you all the way behind your cover, so you should be able to snipe at the enemy with impunity until the whole area is clear.

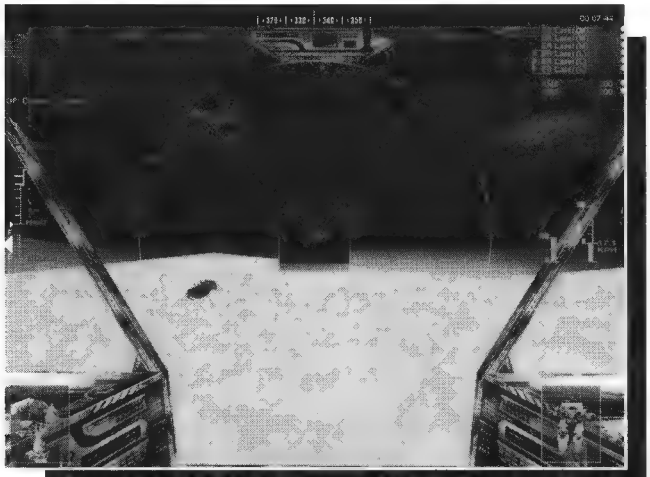


Figure 8-2. Attack the enemy while running in and out of the cover of a hill.

Now proceed north toward Point Able. You must destroy the generator there, but your lancemates are likely to destroy it before you even get there—so don't worry about it.

From Point Able, you can see a pair of Autocannon Turrets to the north. Take them out, and an Avatar is likely to appear. Attack the Avatar from near Point Able, without approaching it. Order your lancemates to help. Eventually the Avatar will fall.

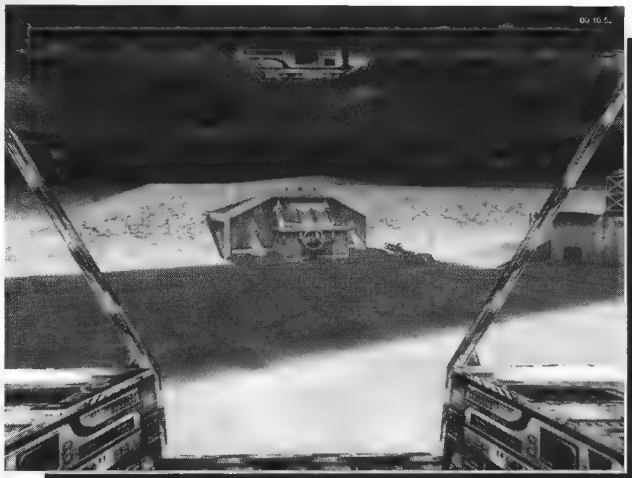


Figure 8-3. By the time you reach the generator, it's likely to have been destroyed by your lancemates.

At this point, you should probably repair your 'Mechs. You can either summon the MFBs to this side of the chasm or backtrack to the other side. Summoning them to the MFB Point nearest Point Able is easiest, though this may stir up a 'Mech or two from the base at Point Baker.

After repairing, approach the spot labeled "Snipe (2)." This spot is right at the edge of a rocky stretch approaching Point Baker. By moving up and down the slope of this rocky area, you can take potshots at several foes at Point Baker, including any remaining Autocannon Turrets, two Strikers, and two Centurions.

The enemy 'Mechs are likely to chase you. Destroy the closest ones and then work your way to the farthest ones, ordering your lancemates to assist you.

When all of these foes are gone, proceed north. An Orion will appear. Concentrate your fire on the Orion.

When the Orion's gone, approach Point Baker and destroy the dome that you find there. (Again, your lancemates are likely to destroy it before you even get close.)

TIP

It's possible that you'll destroy the dome at Point Baker by accident, while you're busy shooting at the Orion. If this happens, you can simply turn your back on the Orion and run to Point Charlie for the win.

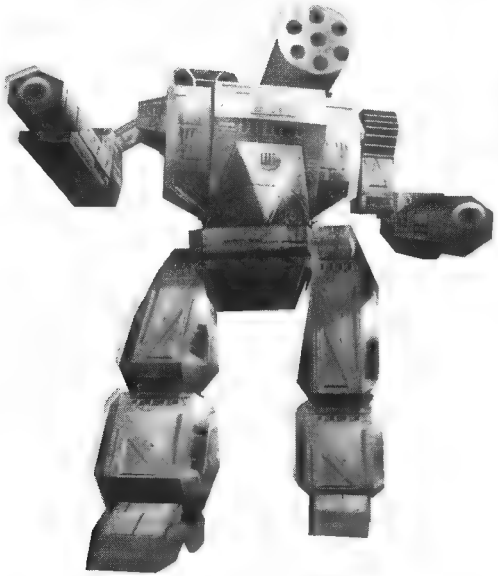
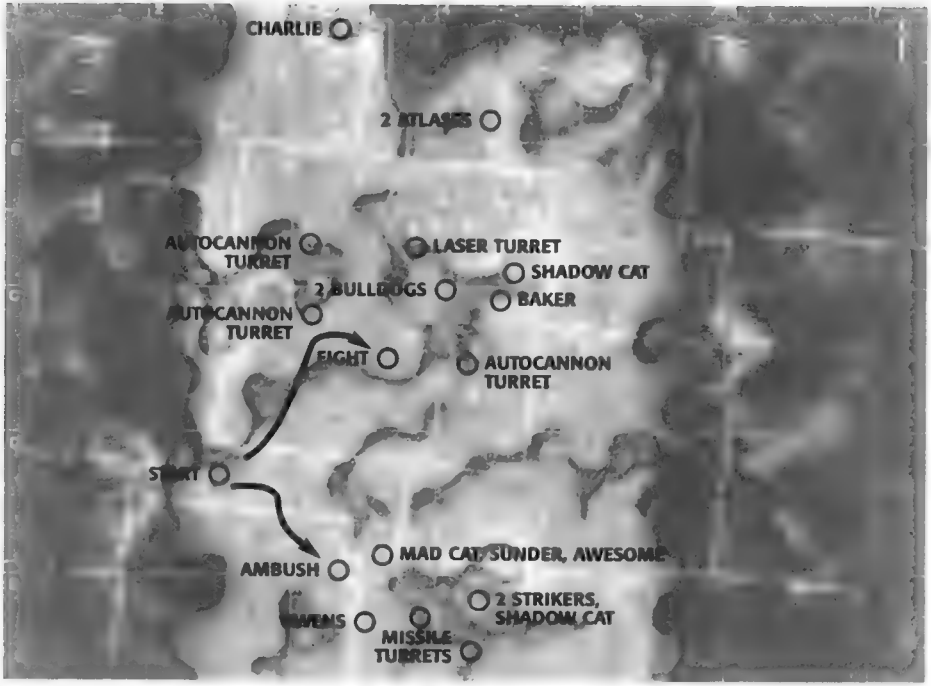


Figure 8-4. Your lancemates are likely to destroy this dome before you get close enough to even notice it.

Now your only remaining task is to return to the base at Point Charlie. Order your lancemates to hold their position while you cross the bridge that leads you to Point Charlie. (If you let them follow you, they may have trouble getting across that bridge.) The mission is a success when you reach Point Charlie.

MISSION 2



This mission requires you to stop Commander Sinclair as he proceeds toward Portal Base, which is a base in the northern part of the map. You also are tasked with destroying two enemy camps, but these objectives are secondary.

Sinclair is piloting a Mad Cat, and he's escorted by some pretty heavy 'Mechs. Fighting this group of 'Mechs in an outright battle is a bad idea, but by hiding underwater you can take out Sinclair with ease.

- Stop Sinclair on his way to Portal (at Point Charlie) (Primary)
- Destroy camp and defenses at Point Able (Secondary)
- Destroy camp and defenses at Point Baker (Secondary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

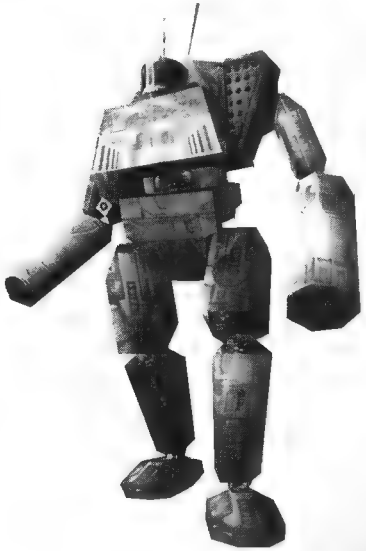
As usual, take your biggest 'Mechs. We recommend packing your lancemates' 'Mechs with long-range weapons like Clan ER PPCs. Your own 'Mech should have as many Medium Lasers and Clan ER Medium Lasers as possible, plus a single Clan ER Large Laser or standard ER Large Laser. You'll need one ultra-long-range weapon to take out turrets from extreme distances.

Don't worry that much about heat, because you'll spend much of this mission fighting in the water. Water cools off your 'Mech quickly, so you shouldn't have any heat difficulties.

Success in the early part of this mission is predicated on staying *fully* underwater. When your entire 'Mech is underwater, the enemy will have a difficult time targeting you—but thanks to your 'Mech's targeting system, you should have no trouble at all shooting at *them*.

Your enemies include:

- 1 Mad Cat
- 1 Sunder
- 1 Awesome
- 2 Missile Turrets
- 2 Strikers
- 2 Shadow Cats
- 3 Autocannon Turrets
- 1 Laser Turret
- 2 Bulldogs
- 2 Atlases (It's recommended that you avoid these)



STRATEGY

Your forces start out in the western part of the map. Immediately turn south and start following the path indicated on the Battle Map. This path takes you into deep water that covers your 'Mechs' heads—don't worry, that's the idea.

As you move along the path, an Owens approaches. Blast it from underwater. You won't be able to see the Owens very well, but that's okay. Your targeting computer allows you to shoot at targets that you can't actually see.

When you reach the spot labeled "Ambush," stop in your tracks. You should be fully submerged, and standing fairly close (but not *too* close) to a bridge.

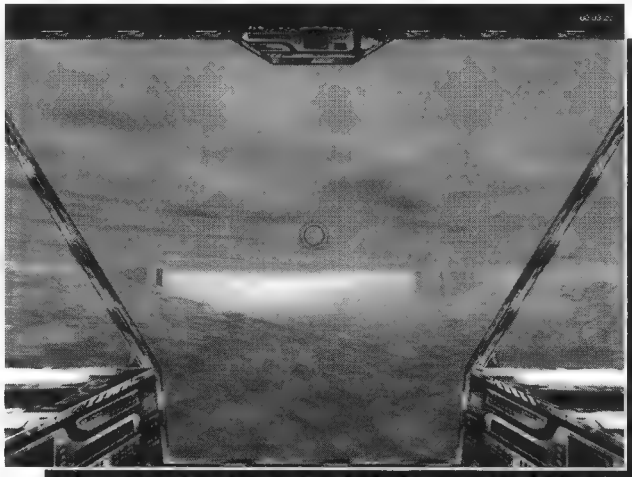
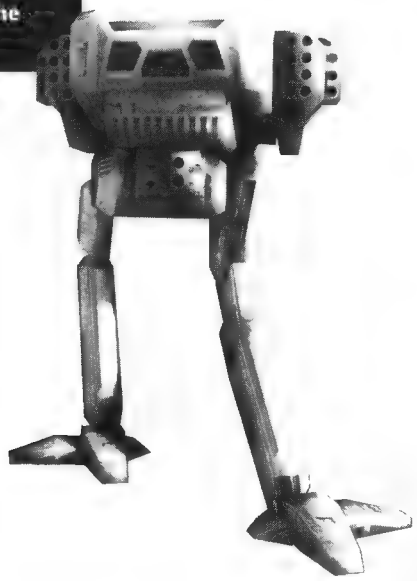


Figure 8-5. Stop in your tracks before you reach the bridge. Make sure that you're fully underwater.

Cycle through the targets to the southeast. Among them is the Mad Cat piloted by Sinclair. Target this Mad Cat and wait as it approaches the bridge. Keep your targeting reticule on the Mad Cat, aiming high. When the reticule turns yellow, indicating a clean shot, start blasting the Mad Cat from underwater. The Mad Cat won't be able to effectively return fire.



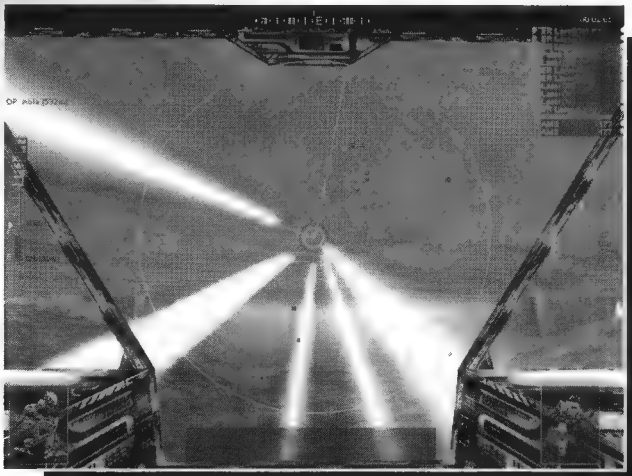


Figure 8-6. Blast the Mad Cat from the safety of the water.

Continue blasting the Mad Cat as it crosses the bridge. Eventually it'll fall in its tracks and the mission is a success. If you wanted to, you could quit right now and score an easy victory. However, we'll assume that you want to fully complete the mission, so keep reading.

Stay right where you are, underwater. A Sunder is the next 'Mech to cross the bridge. Blast it as it crosses. Then blast an Awesome that tries to cross.

At this point, all of Sinclair's lance is gone. All that remains is to attack the bases at Point Able and Point Baker. If you need to repair your 'Mechs before attacking these bases, backtrack through the deep water to the MFBs and do so. Then return to the ambush site.

From the ambush site, pop in and out of the water just far enough to take quick shots at targets near Point Able. These include a pair of Missile Turrets, two Strikers, and a Shadow Cat. (If you're lucky, the Shadow Cat will approach close enough for you to destroy it while you're fully submerged.) Just keep popping in and out of the water until all targets visible from here are destroyed, then run into the base and clean up anything that remains. Send your lancemates in too.

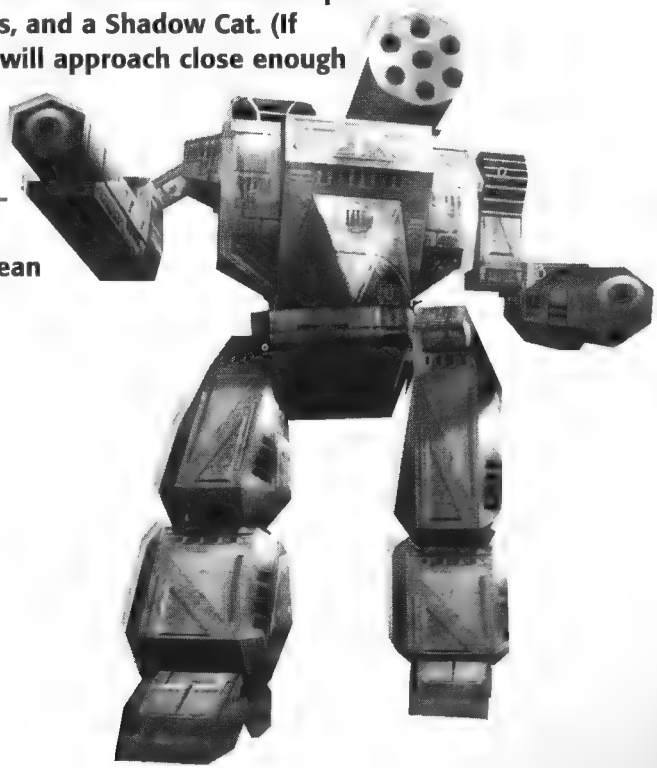
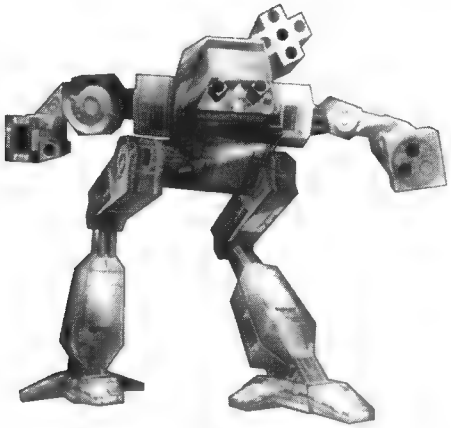


Figure 8-7. Pop in and out of the water, attacking targets at Point Able.

When all opposition at Point Able is destroyed, return to your starting point for repairs. Then slowly proceed northeast along the path leading to the spot marked "Fight." Proceed slowly, targeting and destroying turrets as soon as they appear with your Clan ER Large Laser. You won't take any return damage from these turrets if you attack them from 900 meters or more, so be careful to destroy them before getting within medium range.

Keep moving toward the spot labeled "Attack," destroying turrets before entering their firing range. Eventually a pair of Bulldogs and a Shadow Cat will appear near Point Baker. Drop into the water at the point labeled "Attack," and run back and forth in the water while shooting at the Bulldogs and ordering your lancemates to attack. When the Bulldogs are gone, have your lancemates attack the Shadow Cat and then attack it yourself, running toward Point Baker as you fight.

As you run toward Point Baker, you might notice a pair of Atlases powering up, well to the north. Destroy the Shadow Cat quickly and then destroy the cab of a large truck parked at Point Baker. Destroying that truck will complete your final mission objective.



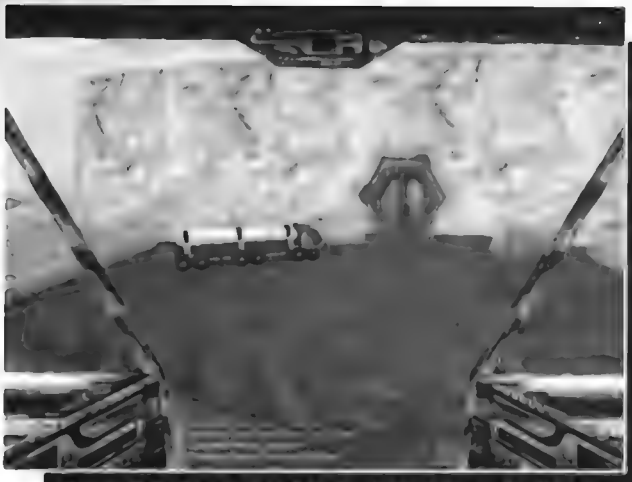
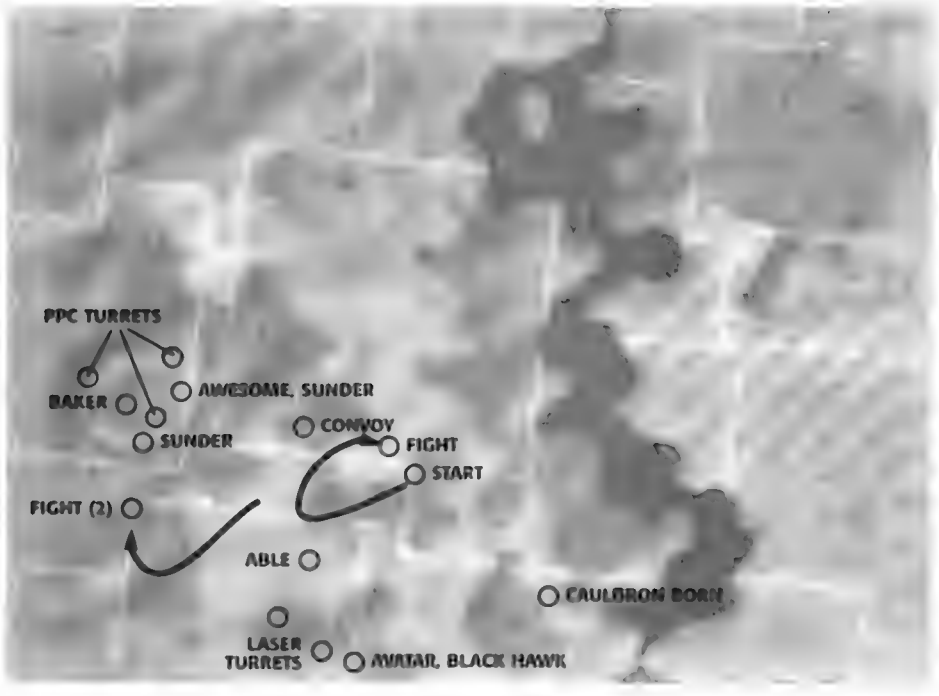


Figure 8-8. As soon as this truck is destroyed, all of your objectives are complete.

You can stick around and try to fight the Atlases, but since they're deadly and you've already completed all of your objectives, we recommend simply ending the mission now. There's no profit in fighting those monsters.

MISSION 3



Federated Suns forces have captured your base. Your task in this mission is twofold. First, capture a convoy before it reaches Point Able. Then, eliminate all Federated Suns presence near Point Baker to retake the base.

To capture the convoy, you must destroy the forces guarding it. These forces include a Centurion and two Bulldogs. Don't attack the convoy trucks themselves; you'll fail the mission if you destroy all of them.

This is a tough combat mission. You need to make good use of your lancemates and use sound tactics to win.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Capture enemy convoy at Point Able (Primary)
- Destroy base BattleMechs at Point Baker (Primary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Take your three largest 'Mechs along on this mission; take the Vulture for yourself. Give your lancemates Clan ER PPCs for power and range, and give yourself lots of Medium Lasers and Clan ER Medium Lasers. Also take a pair of Clan ER Large Lasers for destroying the very longest-range targets.

Load up on AMS and armor; they help keep your 'Mechs alive longer, and might mean the difference between success and failure.

Though this mission takes place on a map with a chasm down the middle, you won't have to cross it—so jump jets aren't necessary.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Laser Turrets
- 2 Bulldogs
- 1 Centurion
- 1 Avatar
- 1 Black Hawk
- 1 Cauldron Born
- 3 PPC Turrets
- 2 Sunders
- 1 Awesome

TIP

Because each mission in the pirate campaign is a separate entity, you should *always* make sure that your 'Mechs are equipped with maximum armor and several AMS before fighting. Don't assume that just because you had a Thor two missions ago, and you added armor to *that* Thor, that the Thor you have in this mission has maximum armor.

STRATEGY

The instant you appear on the battlefield, select your Clan Large ER Lasers and start moving due west at full speed. Your lancemates will follow.

As you move west, a pair of Laser Turrets appears to the southwest, and the convoy appears to the west. Cycle through potential targets and quickly assign your lancemates to destroy one of the units escorting the convoy—ideally, a Bulldog. Meanwhile, quickly take out the southern turrets with your Clan ER Large Lasers.

TIP

It's key to take out those Laser Turrets the very instant they appear on radar. They'll pick you apart if you allow them to remain.

When no more turrets are in sight, turn your full attention to the convoy. Destroy the other Bulldog guarding the convoy, then take on the Centurion that's bringing up the rear. Be sure to assign your lancemates to attack the Centurion as soon as they've taken out a Bulldog.

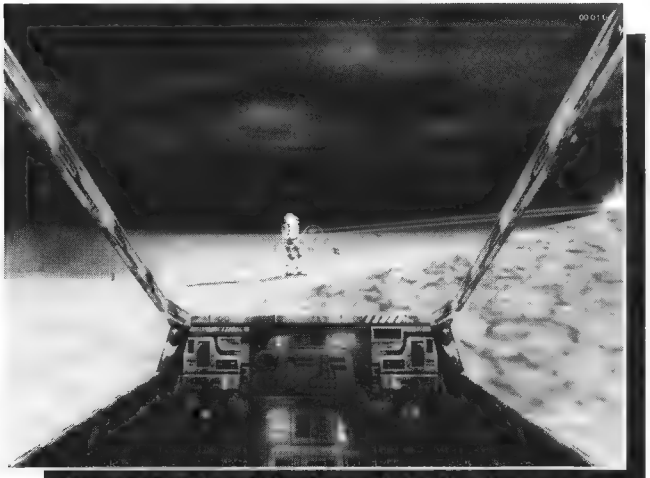


Figure 8-9. Take out the forces defending the convoy, not the convoy itself.

When the two Bulldogs and Centurion are gone, the convoy is officially captured. But don't sit around admiring the scenery. Immediately retreat to the spot labeled "Fight." An Avatar and a Black Hawk will presently power up to the south, but if you remain at the spot labeled "Fight," you'll be protected from these two 'Mechs by ridges—at least for a short while.

Figure 8-10. Don't worry about the trucks. They won't try to get away after you've destroyed their escort.

At the spot labeled "Fight," stand slightly behind your MFBs. The Avatar and Black Hawk will attack you here, along with a Cauldron Born (if you happened to wander too far west). As soon as the enemy 'Mechs crest the ridge, order your lancemates to attack, and fire at the enemy yourself. With your heavy complement of medium-range weapons, you should be able to destroy these newcomers quickly.

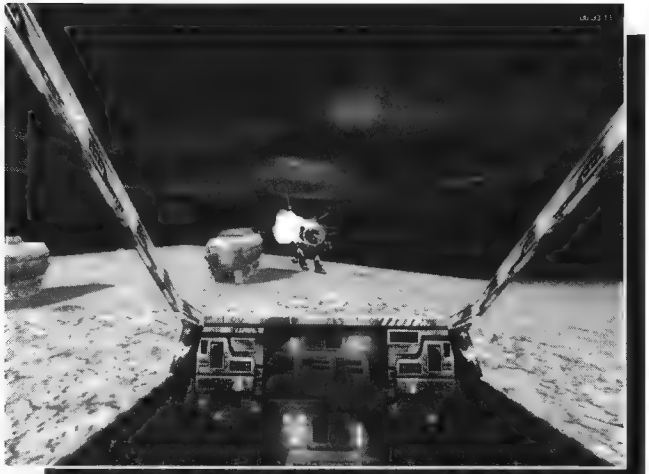


Figure 8-11. When the enemies crest the ridge near your MFBs, advance and let 'em have it.

Now you may repair at the MFBs. If you didn't encounter it earlier, a Cauldron Born will be running around to the southeast—and it may attack. If so, you'll probably want to destroy it with long-range fire before repairing. Or, if you're truly damaged but your lancemates are fine, order them to attack and repair yourself while they distract the Cauldron Born.

When all of your 'Mechs have been restored to good shape (you should still have both lancemates at this point), run to the spot labeled "Fight (2)," following the path drawn on the Battle Map. This spot lies behind a tall ridge to the south of Point Baker. Look for opportunities to quickly destroy the PPC Turrets guarding Point Baker as you approach.

From the area labeled "Fight (2)," use your long-range weapons to take out any remaining PPC Turrets from extreme range.

Several heavy 'Mechs also become visible as you enter this area. If you stay in the vicinity of the spot labeled "Fight (2)," you should be able to deal with them more or less individually. First, a Sunder will approach. Sink behind the ridge and order your lancemates to attack as soon as the Sunder crests the ridge. Attack it yourself, too.

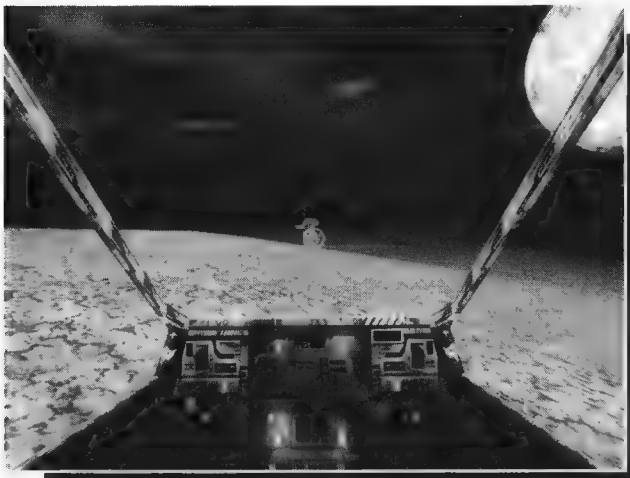
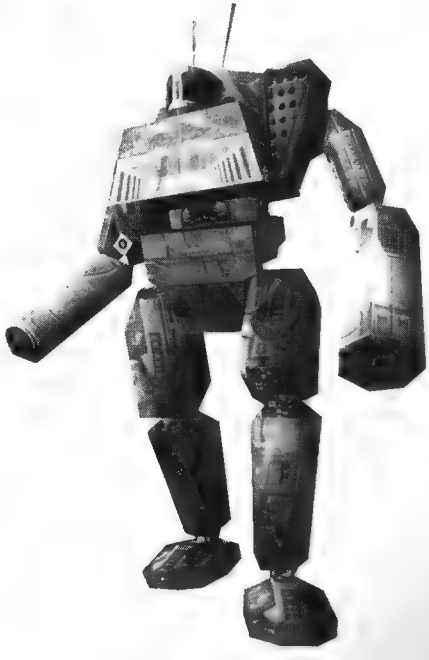
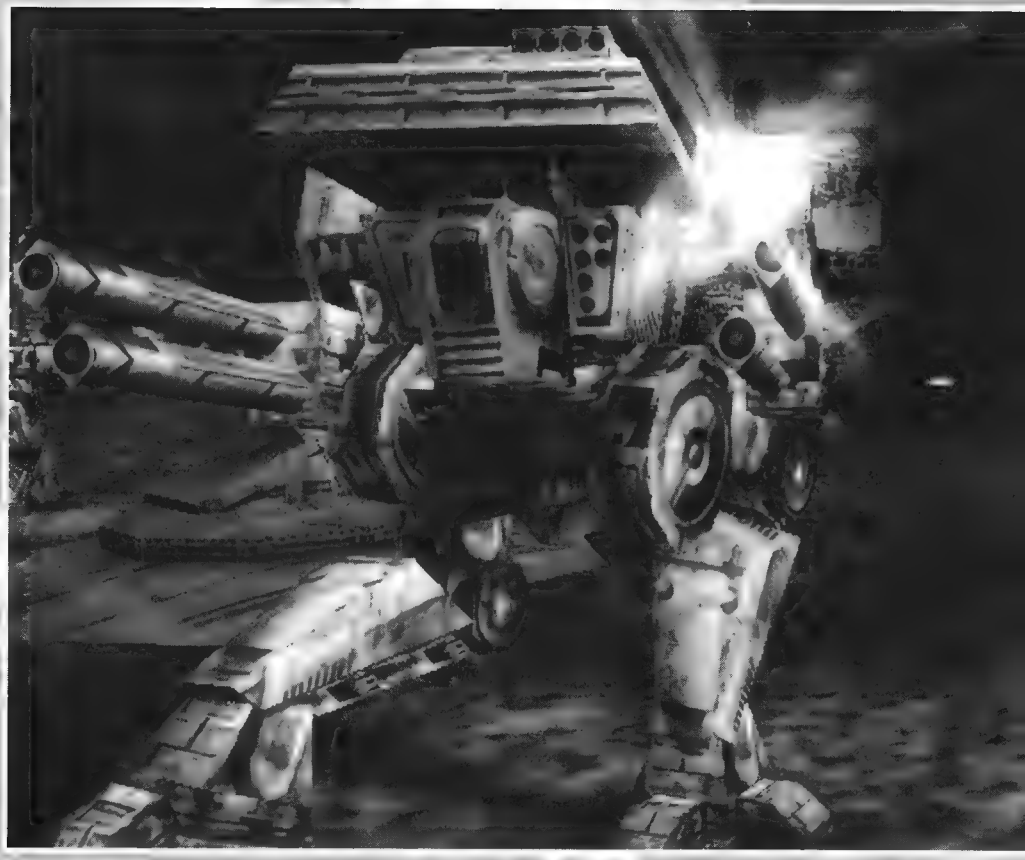


Figure 8-12. You can run back for quick repairs after destroying the first Sunder.

When this Sunder is destroyed, you can sneak back to your MFBs to repair. If you don't need repairs, press north toward Point Baker. A second Sunder and an Awesome are guarding the base. Order your lancemates to attack, and use ridges to protect yourself from the enemy until you're at the proper range to attack. This fight is fairly tough, but you should do fine if you didn't lose your lancemates earlier, and if you're all still in relatively good shape.

When these two 'Mechs are destroyed, the mission is a success.



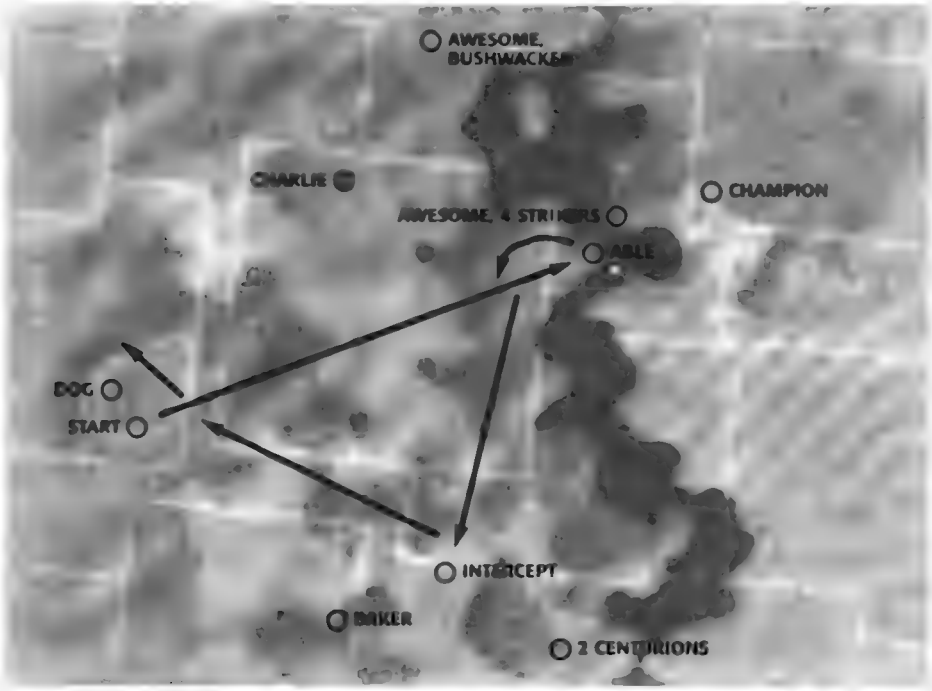


CHAPTER 9
PIRATE MISSIONS 4–6

THESE NEXT FEW missions require you to do things *quickly*. Missions 4 and 5 require you to move from one place to another very quickly, while Mission 6 requires you to destroy enemy 'Mechs very quickly. All of these missions pose legitimate challenges, but you may find Mission 4 the hardest, just because you haven't been forced to run around as fast in past missions.

Just to make things harder, you won't have access to all of the weapons and gear that you'd like to use. Therefore, you'll often end up patching together 'Mechs with whatever gear you've got, and hoping for the best. Such is the life of a pirate . . .

MISSION 4



This mission requires some serious explanation, so pay attention!

We're assuming that you're playing the mission on High difficulty. It's very difficult to accomplish all of your objectives on High difficulty—not impossible, but it's *very* hard. So hard, in fact, that we're recommending a strategy that leaves out one of the secondary objectives. Usually we try to ensure that you accomplish *all* objectives, but in this case it's so hard to accomplish all of your secondary objectives that we don't think it's worthwhile. We *do* give you tips on completing every objective if you feel the need to be perfect, but our main walk-through suggests a strategy that leaves one secondary objective incomplete.

If you're playing on a lower difficulty level, it's easier to accomplish all of your objectives. But we still recommend our strategy, unless you like to punish yourself.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Protect at least one Antenna (Primary)
- Protect pirate base at Point Dog (Primary)
- Head off vehicles at bridge, Point Able (Secondary)
- Protect Antenna at Point Baker (Secondary)
- Protect Antenna at Point Charlie (Secondary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

This is one mission where speed counts. Take the heaviest 'Mechs you can get your hands on, and then make sure that they all have top speeds of at least 78 kilometers per hour (kph)—ideally more like 82 kph. Increase your 'Mechs' engine sizes if they're too slow.

Also, give all of your 'Mechs the maximum amount of armor, and give your own 'Mech two AMS. Equip your 'Mech with a large battery of Medium Lasers and Clan ER Medium Lasers—at least nine or ten in total. Equip your lancemates' 'Mechs with long-range weapons, like Clan ER PPCs.

If you're playing on Low or Normal difficulty, and *if* you've decided to try to complete *all* secondary objectives, make sure that your 'Mechs all top out at least at 85 kph, and more like 90 kph if possible. You have to move quickly if you want to complete *all* secondary objectives, and at the lower difficulty levels it won't hurt to trade some weapons or heat sinks for extra speed.

Also, *if* you're planning on completing all secondary objectives, read the entire walkthrough and then refer to the tip at the end for advice on how to complete everything.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Awesomes
- 4 Strikers
- 1 Champion
- 2 Centurions
- 1 Bushwhacker

STRATEGY

Your start out near your base. Immediately move toward Point Able at top speed. Move in a straight line and waste no time. When you're going in the right direction at full speed, order your MFBs to deploy right next to your starting point.

As you get close to the bridge at Point Able, you see an Awesome followed by four Strikers. If you moved quickly enough, these units have not yet crossed the bridge. Keep moving toward the bridge and order your lancemates to attack the Awesome. Don't attack the Awesome yourself; instead, target the Strikers. Move very close to the bridge, stop, and just stand there, shooting Strikers.

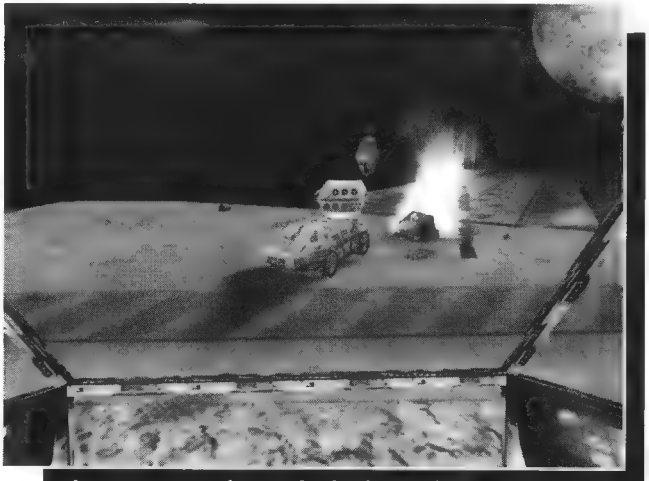


Figure 9-1. Stand near the bridge and blast Strikers as they approach.

TIP

The Awesome will beat up on you a little as you attack the Strikers, but don't fight back. Let your lancemates attack it. If you never shoot the Awesome, it eventually just ignores you and focuses on shooting at your lancemates instead—because they *are* shooting at it.

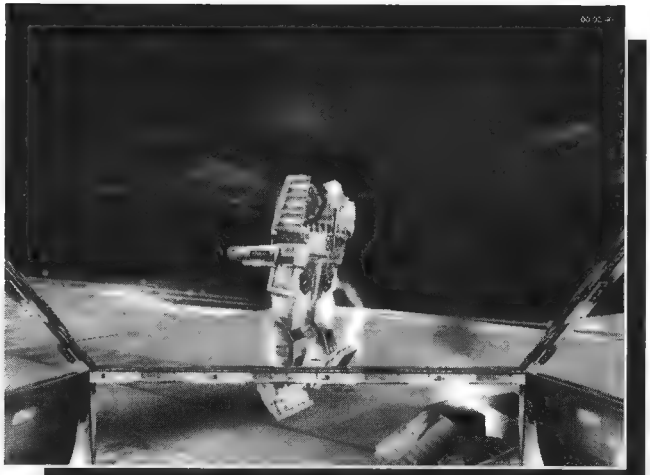


Figure 9-2. If you don't fire at the Awesome, but your lancemates do, the Awesome won't bother you too much—in fact, it'll ignore you.

If you manage to destroy all four Strikers quickly enough, you complete a secondary objective. Even if you don't get them quickly enough to complete the objective, you need to destroy them before they get past you and make a dash for your base.

When the Strikers are destroyed, focus your fire on the Awesome and help your lancemates destroy it. Then stand near Point Able and watch the radar. The very

instant a Champion comes into radar view, target it and order one of your lancemates to attack it (ideally, a lancemate in a heavy, fairly undamaged 'Mech).

Immediately proceed south along the path marked on your Battle Map, toward the spot marked "Intercept." Take your other lancemate along with you, and *don't* wait to see what becomes of the Champion. Let your single lancemate handle it.

TIP

There is a very slight chance, especially on High difficulty, that your lancemate will fail to kill the Champion, and that the Champion will then wreck your base at Point Dog. However, under most circumstances your lancemate should be able to win—because the Champion will try to sneak past your lancemate rather than fighting properly.

If your lancemate fails to kill the Champion and you lose because of it, consider it a fluke and try again. It's highly unlikely to happen again.

At the spot marked "Intercept," you find two Centurions moving in from the east. Approach these Centurions and destroy them as quickly as possible, using the single lancemate you brought along for assistance. The Centurions should fall quickly to your group-fired Medium Lasers.

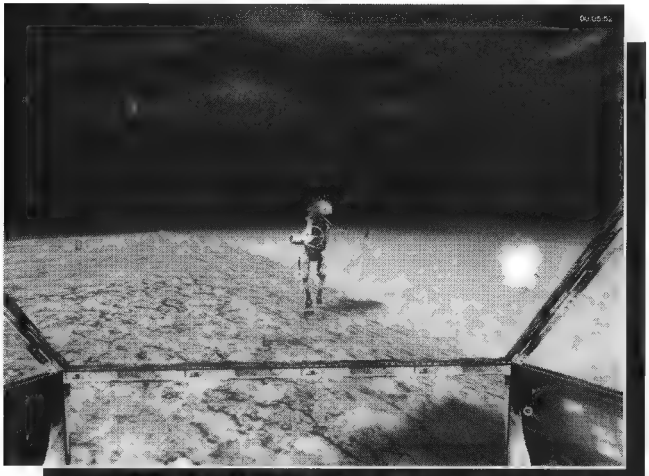


Figure 9-3. Take down the Centurions. They may try to sneak past you; if so, just shoot them in the back.

TIP

You may find it helpful to get behind the enemy. They're so intent on running toward the base at Point Dog that you'll get some good shots at their backs if you wander behind them.

If you allow these enemies to wreck the base at Point Dog, you lose.

When the Centurions are destroyed, run at full speed back toward Point Dog.

You should reach Point Dog before an enemy Bushwhacker and Awesome arrive from the north. You may or may not have time to repair your 'Mech before they arrive.

Eventually the Bushwhacker approaches from the north, followed by the Awesome. Order your lancemates to attack these foes, and then attack them yourself.

When the Bushwhacker and Awesome have both been destroyed, the mission is a success.

Figure 9-4. When the Bushwhacker and Awesome are reduced to flaming debris, the mission is a success.

TIP

If you really want to complete *all* secondary objectives, we recommend playing on Low or Medium difficulty. Take very fast 'Mechs—your own 'Mech should top out at around 95 kph, while your lancemates don't need to be quite as fast.

Follow our walkthrough until you reach the point where you'd normally wait for the Champion. Instead of waiting for the Champion, run to Point Charlie and target the Satellite Antenna. (Aim for the base of the Antenna when you're trying to target it.) Use the command Defend My Target to order both lancemates to defend the Antenna.

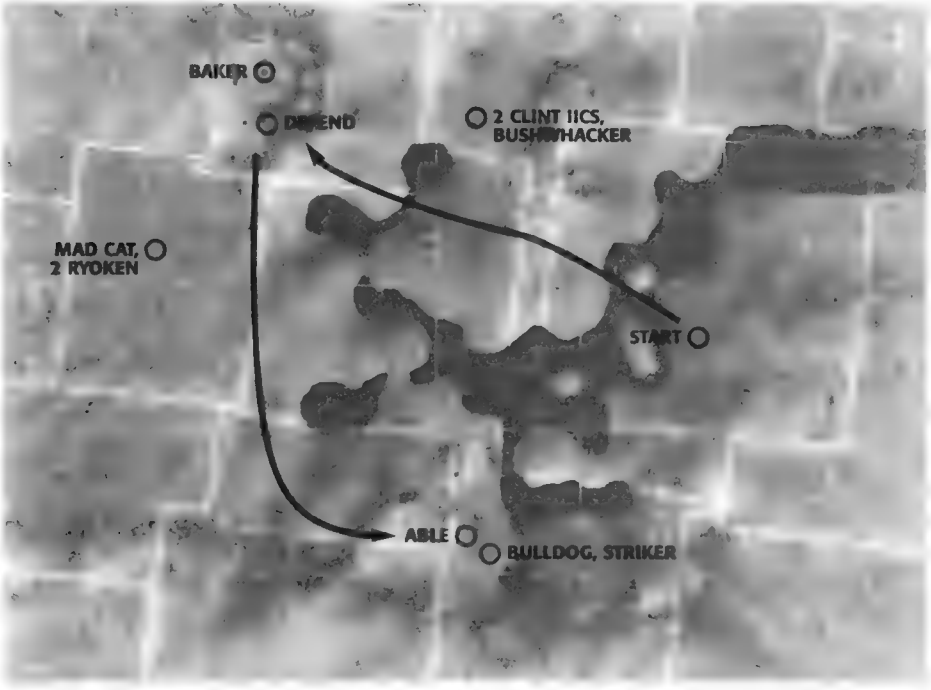
Now proceed south at full speed toward the spot marked "Intercept." Along the way, the Champion appears on your radar screen. Intercept the Champion and destroy it as quickly as possible, then continue toward the Intercept spot.

If you destroyed the Champion quickly enough, you'll still be able to catch the two Centurions near the Intercept spot. Destroy both Centurions.

If all goes well, your two lancemates will now intercept and destroy the Bushwhacker and Awesome near Point Charlie. If they succeed, your mission is a complete success.

It's very difficult to do this, even at the lowest difficulty setting. You have to move quickly and fight quickly, and not waste a single movement.

MISSION 5



This mission tasks you with defending the base at Point Baker. A secondary objective is to destroy a pair of vehicles at Point Able. Both objectives are attainable, though this is another tough combat mission, especially if you're playing at High difficulty.

The trick to this mission is ignoring the obvious battle plan, and following the instructions in the Strategy section. Other strategies are possible, but we think you'll find ours the easiest.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Protect base at Point Baker from Enemy Attack (Primary)
- Destroy vehicles at Point Able (Secondary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

The enemy starts out in the south and works its way north toward Point Baker as the mission progresses. The obvious plan is to move to Point Able, destroy the vehicles there, and then move to Point Baker for defense. However, we recommend completing your objectives in reverse order. By defending the base first, you keep your forces together and ensure that the enemy doesn't get past you.

Use your heaviest 'Mechs on this mission. Take the very heaviest 'Mech (a Supernova) for yourself. However—and this is key—equip all 'Mechs with jump jets, and make sure that every 'Mech has a top speed that's at least in the low 60s. This requires substantial engine upgrades for the biggest 'Mechs, especially the Supernova.

Equip your lancemates with the usual long-range weapons. Take some Clan LRM racks for yourself, plus the usual battery of nine or so Clan ER Medium Lasers.

Your enemies include the following:

- 1 Mad Cat
- 2 Ryoken
- 2 Clint IICs
- 1 Bushwhacker
- 1 Bulldog
- 1 Striker

STRATEGY

When the mission starts, turn north and follow the path drawn on the Battle Map. Move at full speed. This path requires you to jump to a rock in the middle of a chasm, and then from the rock to the other side. Later, a jump across another chasm is necessary.

Don't worry about your lancemates; they'll follow you without difficulty. Just worry about getting to the spot marked "Defend" without falling into a chasm. Also, when you're about halfway to the spot marked Defend, order your MFBs to move toward the MFB point at Point Baker.

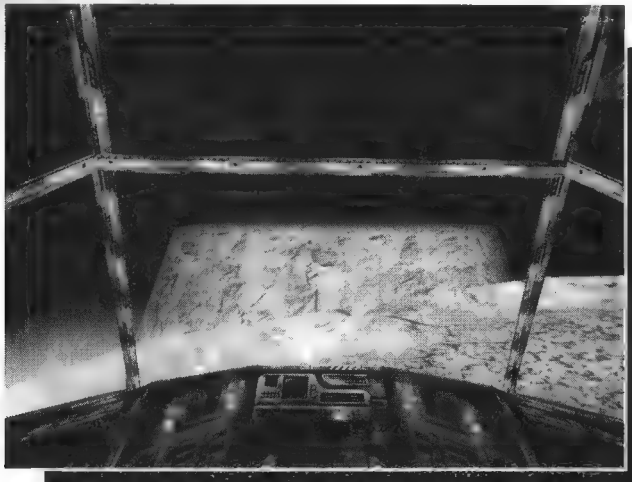


Figure 9-5. Be careful as you jump across these chasms. It's not so hard if you pay close attention to what you're doing.

When you reach the spot marked "Defend," wait while your lancemates catch up to you. The first enemy that you see is a Mad Cat approaching from the south. Order your lancemates to attack the Mad Cat, and hang back somewhat until they're shooting at it. Add a few missile volleys, but stay near the spot marked "Defend."

TIP

You may lose some MFBs in this mission. That's perfectly fine. Remember that these missions aren't a true campaign—so losing an MFB in this mission won't affect the number of MFBs available in the next mission.

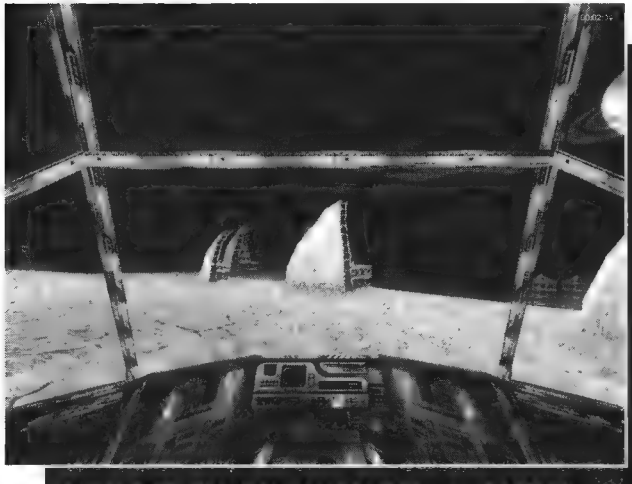


Figure 9-06. This is the base that you must defend. Don't retreat all the way behind those triangular walls. They're good protection, but if you hide back there the enemy will destroy the base.

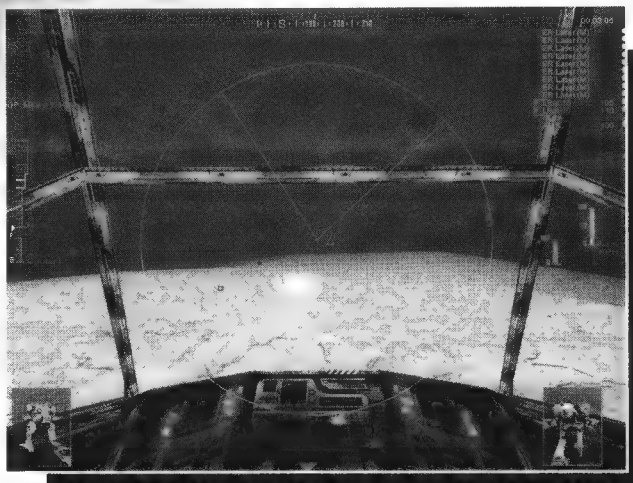


Figure 9-07. Stay near the base as you attack the Mad Cat and Ryoken.

A pair of Ryoken approaches somewhat behind the Mad Cat. When these appear, allow your lancemates to keep attacking the Mad Cat, and start firing missiles into the Ryoken. Switch to Clan ER Medium Lasers when the Ryoken get close. And remember that you can duck behind the nearby ridges to avoid getting hit.

TIP

If you get severely damaged at any point, start hiding behind the ridges more, and try to let your lancemates do more of the work.

When the Mad Cat and both Ryoken have fallen, watch the east. A Bushwhacker and two Clint IICs approach from that direction; have your lancemates attack the Bushwhacker, and lend fire support with your missiles.

When the Bushwhacker and Clint IICs are gone, the base at Point Baker is safe. Now take the path leading south toward Point Able.

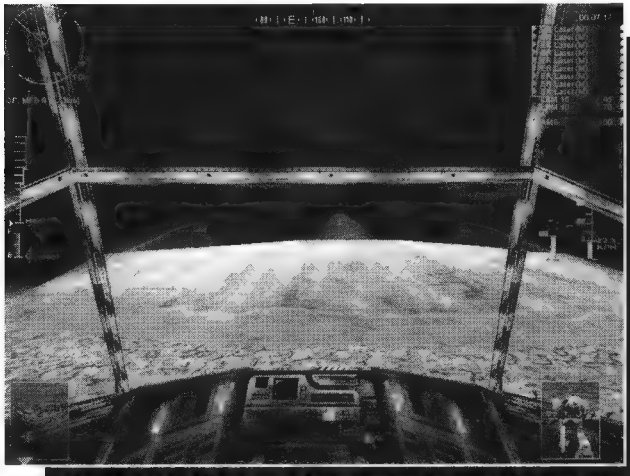
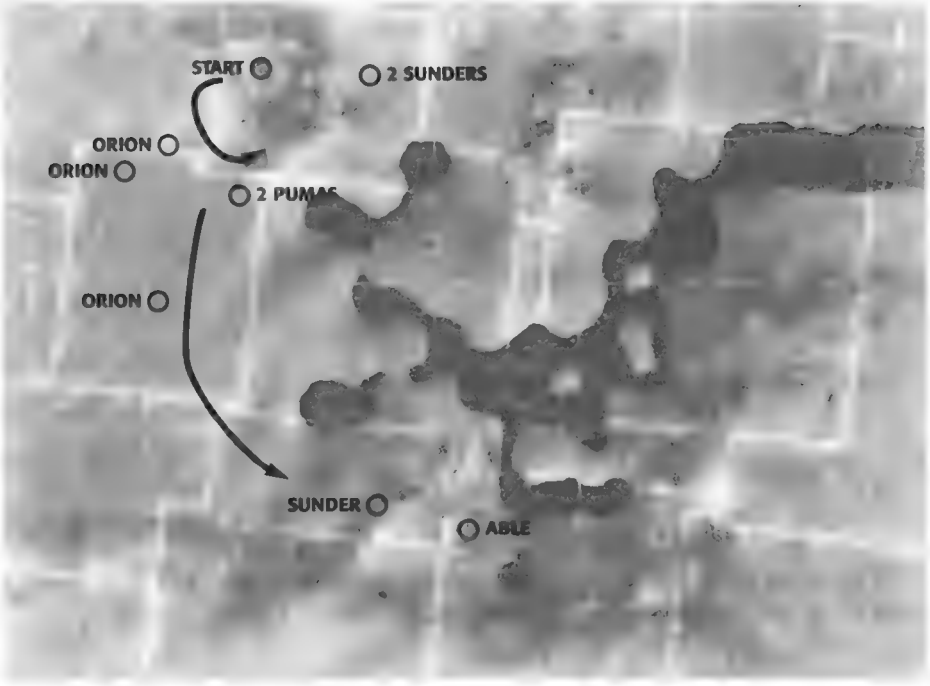


Figure 9-08. Allow your lancemates to precede you into these ruins, then destroy the vehicles waiting in there.

As you approach Point Able, a Bulldog and a Striker appear on radar. Order your lancemates ahead to take on these vehicles, meanwhile following at a distance.

When both vehicles are destroyed, your secondary objective is complete. You can now exit from the mission area.

MISSION 6



Your tasks in this mission are first to protect your base, then to destroy an enemy base at the southern edge of the map. This mission doesn't require too much finesse; pure power is better. Taking the best 'Mechs and weapons for the job is crucial, as is destroying the enemy quickly and efficiently.

Despite the difficulty of combat, this mission is quite winnable. If you can survive the early onslaught on your base, you're almost done.

Your objectives include the following:

- Protect pirate base at Point Start
- Destroy base and defenses at Point Able

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

The first part of this mission, which features a powerful assault on your base, is the toughest part. If you can handle the assault without losing any of your 'Mech's weapons, and if you manage to keep at least two of your lancemates alive, you're doing pretty well.

Take the heaviest 'Mechs available; you, personally, should pilot a Sunder. Speed isn't as key in this mission as it was in the last two, but you should still speed up heavy 'Mechs to a respectable pace—say, a 64-kph top speed. Equip your lancemates with the usual array of Clan ER PPCs, Clan ER Large Lasers, and LRMs. We recommend that you take the usual battery of eight to ten Medium Lasers and/or Clan ER Medium Lasers, plus a set of four Clan Streak SRM 6s and lots of ammo. Group-firing all four Streak SRM 6s, then quickly switching to the lasers for another group-fired shot results in a deadly mid-range punch that'll level enemy 'Mechs in no time flat.

Your enemies include:

- 3 Orions
- 3 Sunders
- 2 Pumas

STRATEGY

You start out in the base that you must defend. Two Orions are already attacking. Order your lancemates to gang up on one of the Orions, and attack the other one yourself. Use alternating Streak SRM fire and laser fire to level the Orion quickly, then help your lancemates finish off the other one.

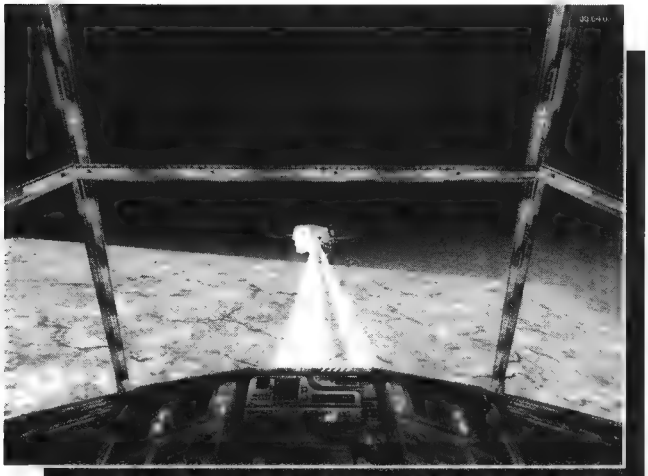


Figure 9-09. Destroy the Orions quickly and efficiently. Speed is essential!

While you've been fighting the Orions, a pair of Sunders have been lumbering in from the east. When the Orions have fallen, order all your lancemates to attack the closest Sunder. Add your own lasers and missiles to their fire to quickly take down one Sunder.

As you fight the Sunders, a pair of Pumas runs up from the south. If you can destroy both Sunders before the Pumas get close, do so. Otherwise, destroy one Sunder and order your lancemates to go after the other one. Meanwhile, intercept the Pumas yourself.

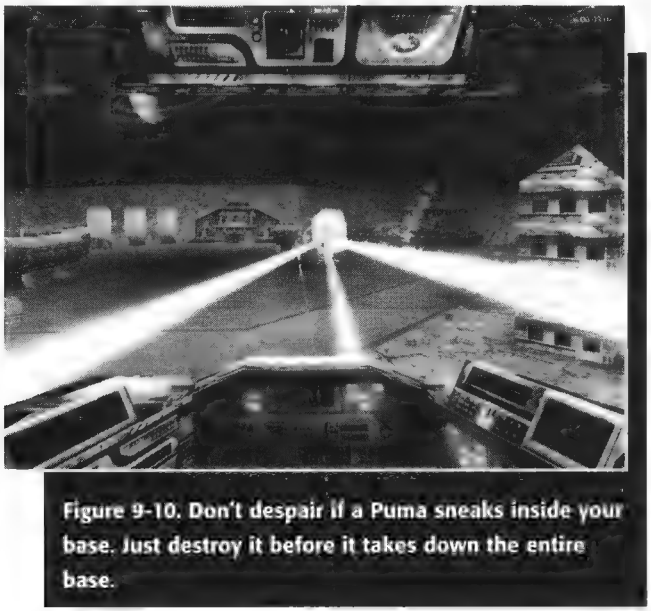


Figure 9-10. Don't despair if a Puma sneaks inside your base. Just destroy it before it takes down the entire base.

TIP

Ideally, you should still have at least two lancemates left. But you can succeed with only one, or even with none.

The Pumas are fast, and try to run right past you in an effort to enter your base. Stay calm and shoot them in the back as they pass you. If you need to chase them into the base, do so, and destroy them quickly. They should be easy pickings for your heavy firepower.

Now order your MFBs to deploy inside the base. Repair yourself, then order your remaining lancemates to repair themselves.

While your 'Mechs are repairing themselves, another Orion is likely to march up from the south. Hang back and allow it to enter your weapons' range, then blast it.

When all of your 'Mechs are in good shape, proceed due south along the path leading to Point Able.

As you approach Point Able, a Sunder attacks. Order your lancemates ahead to destroy it. Add your missiles and lasers to their fire, and the Sunder will fall easily.

Figure 9-11. Take the Sunder down with help from your lancemates.

At this point, you don't have to worry about any more enemies. Just proceed to Point Able, locate the generator, and destroy it to win the mission.

TIP

If the Orion mentioned above didn't attack, you'll encounter it along the way. Take it down quickly, ordering your lancemates to attack.

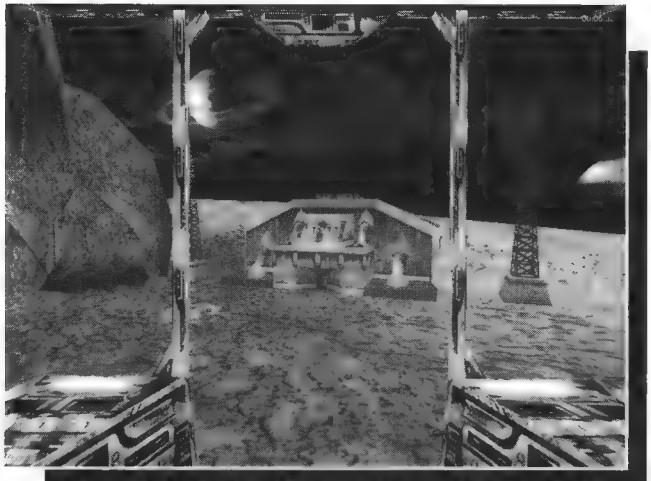


Figure 9-12. Destroy the generator, and you'll win the mission.

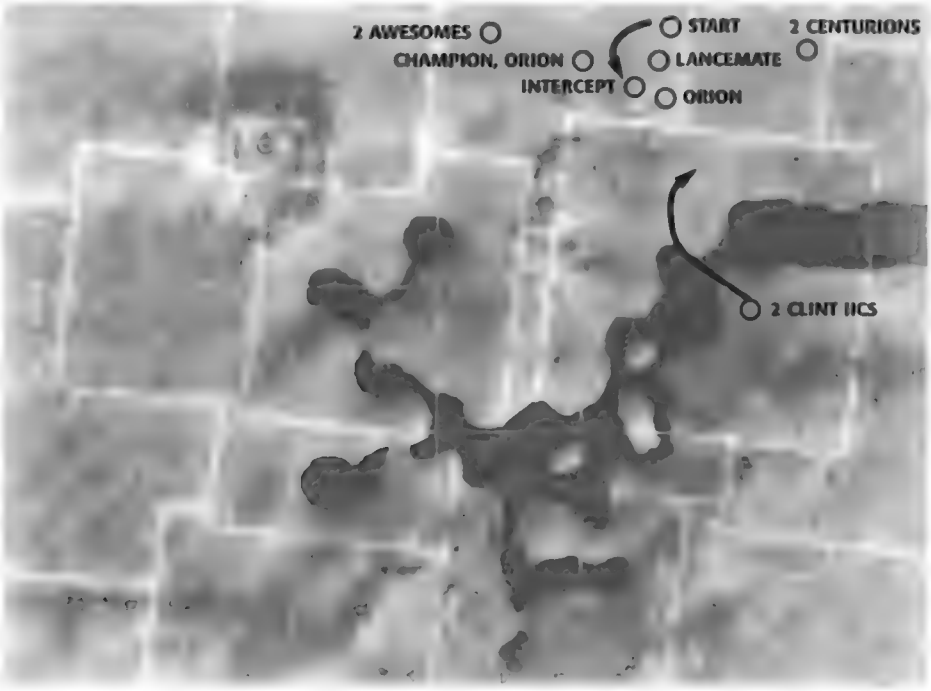
CHAPTER 9: PIRATE MISSION 6

CHAPTER 10
PIRATE MISSIONS 7–10

THESE LAST SEVERAL pirate missions are extremely difficult—probably more so than the last few regular campaign missions. You'll need good reflexes and combat skills in addition to the strategies explained in this book.

Perhaps the hardest part of these missions is that all of them require extensive use of your lancemates. Because your lancemates aren't as reliable as you are, this can sometimes lead to frustration and mission failure. In most cases, turning down the game difficulty on particularly tough missions solves the problem. Even if the problem seems to be one of timing, turning down game difficulty usually helps—because at lower difficulty levels it takes less time to kill an enemy, thus increasing the chances that you'll complete the mission in a timely fashion.

MISSION 7



The object of this mission is to protect a cache of Germanium (located at Point Start) from the enemy. In game terms, this means that if any foes walk into the crater you started in, you lose.

This mission can be brutally hard. If you have trouble with it, feel free to reduce the difficulty level. At higher difficulty levels, it's very tough to destroy all enemies before they reach Point Start.

Also, you'll rely on your lancemate a good deal in this mission, so even at the lower difficulty levels, you may have to try a few times before your lancemate performs well enough to score the victory.

Your objective is as follows:

- Keep enemies from Germanium at Point Start (Primary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

We used extremely heavy 'Mechs in this mission. Because you should stay quite close to the Germanium for defensive purposes, the loss of speed won't be that troublesome.

We outfitted our lancemate's Sunder with four Clan ER Large Lasers and as many Clan Double heat sinks as the thing could carry. We outfitted our Supernova with a mixed group of Medium Lasers and Clan ER Medium Lasers (a total of 10 lasers), plus lots of Clan Double heat sinks and some AMS.

You may have to try this mission a few times before you get your timing right. The toughest part when playing at lower difficulty levels is destroying the smaller enemies before they dash to the Germanium. On High difficulty, the final combat with the Awesomes is also a real challenge.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Orions
- 1 Champion
- 2 Clint IICs
- 2 Centurions
- 2 Awesomes

TIP

It's very important to give your lancemate those Clan ER Large Lasers. They're both accurate and deadly, and a lancemate equipped with them does much more damage than a lancemate with other weapons.

STRATEGY

You start out in a crater at Point Start. Remain down here. Notice that your MFBs are down here as well.

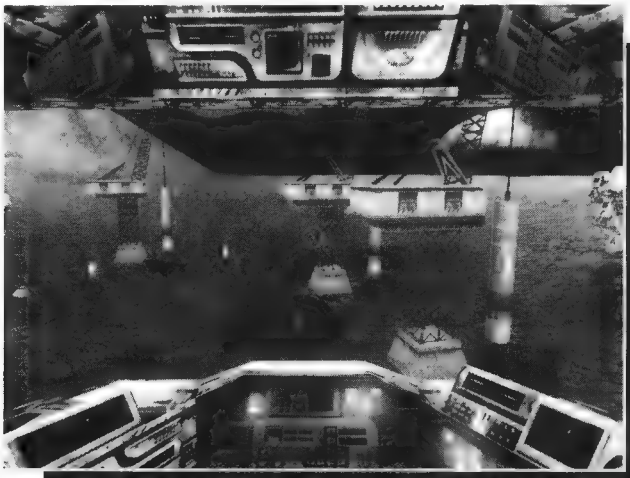


Figure 10-1. This is the Germanium crater that you must defend.

Soon, an Orion and Champion approach from the southwest. Shortly thereafter, another Orion approaches from the southeast. Order your lancemate to attack one of these enemies. That'll get her moving. When she's moved out of the crater, target the southernmost MFB, then order her to defend it, using the Defend Target command.

Meanwhile, hide in the crater until some of the enemies are quite close, allowing your lancemate to attack with her long-range lasers. When the enemy gets into range of your weapons, pop in and out of cover and finish them off with your group-fired Medium Lasers.

TIP

You want your lancemate to defend the crater, but because you can't actually target the crater, the next best thing is to target an MFB that's *in* the crater. Just be sure to have your lancemate defend the *southernmost* MFB, because most enemies approach from the southeast, south, or southwest.

The reason for having her attack an enemy first is that sometimes lancemates ordered to Defend Target won't move enough. The Attack order was just to get her out of the crater, to a spot where she can easily target distant enemies.

Figure 10-2. Your lancemate will defend the crater quite effectively.

Now wait for a while in the crater. Soon a pair of Clint IICs appears from the south. Your lancemate attacks them. Pop out of cover when they're almost in range of your weapons, and attack them yourself.

Meanwhile, a pair of Centurions is approaching Point Able from the east. Your lancemate should start to engage them, but you should also keep an eye out and help to destroy them as they approach. *If* the Centurions are approaching faster or getting closer than the Clint IICs, shift your attention to the Centurions before going back to destroying the Clint IICs. Just destroy whichever enemies are closest and are making the hardest break toward the Germanium.

Figure 10-3. The Centurions run quickly and are pretty durable. They're the most likely 'Mechs to actually get to the Germanium, so you should target them with high priority.

TIP

A pair of Awesomes approaches from the west as you fight the Clint IICs and Centurions. Ignore them for now. You should destroy the little 'Mechs before worrying about the big ones.

If all goes well, you'll destroy at least the nearest of the Clint IIC quickly, and then you'll be able to assist your lancemate in destroying the Centurions. (If you're a poor shot, the Clints will get all the way to the Germanium, and your lancemate won't be able to hold off both the Clints and the Centurions at the same time.) The key is to get your priorities straight, and always go after the 'Mech that's closest to the Germanium.

If you manage to destroy these four small 'Mechs, you'll notice that a pair of Awesomes is now approaching from the west. Order your MFBs to deploy nearby, and have them repair your most damaged 'Mech (if you need repairs, which you probably will). If the most damaged 'Mech is yours, order your lancemate to intercept the Awesomes. That'll distract them long enough for you to get yourself repaired. If your lancemate's 'Mech is the most damaged, hide behind the wall of the crater and wait for your lancemate's repairs to be done before ordering her to attack, then join her.

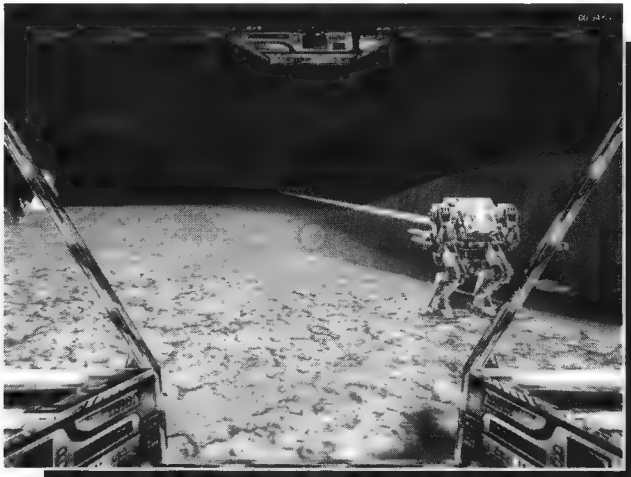


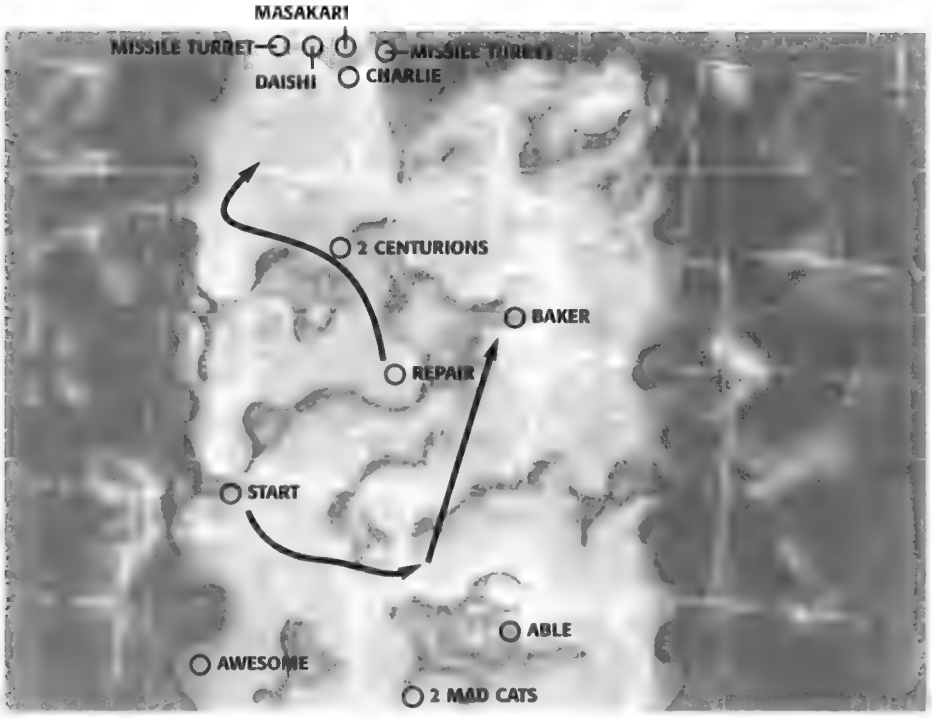
Figure 10-4. Allow your lancemate to lead the charge against the Awesomes.

When both Awesomes are destroyed, the mission is a success.

TIP

Again, this is a very difficult mission. We recommend turning down the difficulty level if you're having trouble.

MISSION 8



Your tasks in this mission are numerous. You must first defend a pair of small friendly bases against Federated Suns attack, then destroy a support beam to demolish an enemy base at Point Charlie. You can get away with defending only one of the friendly bases and letting the other fall to the enemy, but defending both of them *is* a secondary objective.

This mission is difficult, not because of the combat, but because of the speed that you'll have to move at to defend both friendly bases.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Protect at least one allied base (Primary)**
- **Destroy support beam and 'Mechs at Point Charlie (Primary)**
- **Protect allied base at Point Able (Secondary)**
- **Protect allied base at Point Baker (Secondary)**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

For this mission, give your lancemates heavy 'Mechs with heavy weapons. Make sure that their top speeds are all at least 70. As usual, give them Clan Large ER Lasers, Clan ER PPCs, and other potent, long-range weapons.

Take an Avatar for yourself. Increase its top speed up into the low 90s, and give it an array of 10 to 12 Medium Lasers and/or Clan ER Medium Lasers. This map features lots of water, which helps you cool off the massive amount of heat generated by firing all 12 lasers simultaneously.

If you don't want to achieve all your secondary objectives, you could instead take a bigger, slower Mech—but for purposes of completing all objectives, the smaller 'Mech is advisable.

Your enemies include the following:

- 1 Awesome
- 2 Mad Cats
- 2 Centurions
- 2 Missile Turrets
- 1 Masakari
- 1 Daishi

STRATEGY

The instant you start the mission, proceed at full speed toward Point Able. Ignore several heavy 'Mechs that power up to the south, including an Awesome. Just move toward Point Able quickly.

The instant you can see the trucks parked at Point Able, target one of them and order all three of your lancemates to defend it, using the Defend Target command.

Figure 10-5. Target these fuel trucks as quickly as possible, then turn north toward Point Baker.

Now turn north and follow the path leading toward Point Baker. Approach Point Baker as directly as you can.

As you approach, you see a pair of Centurions attacking the trucks parked there. Distract both of the Centurions by getting very close to them and firing at both. As soon as one starts firing at you, concentrate on the other one and get it to fire at you, too.

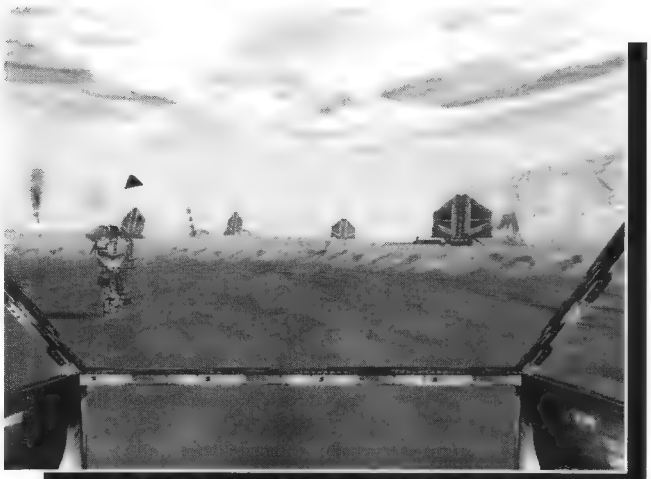


Figure 10-6. Destroy both Centurions, thus protecting the Point Baker base.

You may need to go on land to get close enough to the Centurions to distract them. If this is the case, switch to chain fire, which allows you to fire several times, rapidly, without overheating. Group-firing your lasers on land can result in overheating.

Once both Centurions are shooting at you, feel free to wander back into the water and fight from there. You should be able to destroy both Centurions quickly with group-fired lasers.

TIP

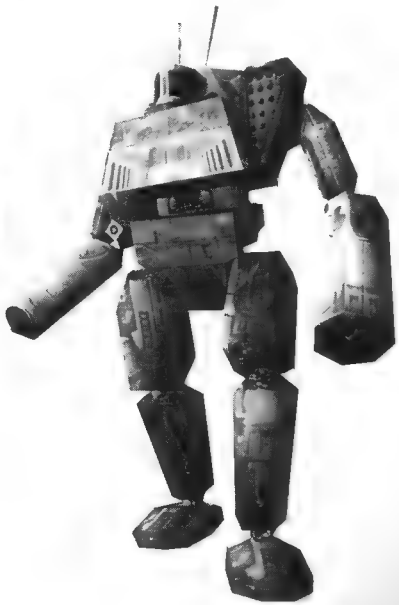
If you're too slow to reach Point Baker, the Centurions might destroy the base before you can distract them. If this happens, turn back toward Point Able and help your lancemates defend that base. Only one base needs to survive.

If it's important to you to keep both bases alive, start over and try again—and this time, try to cut down on any wasted time as you move toward Point Baker. Ask yourself: Am I doing anything that wastes time? Concentrate on details. For example, make sure that your 'Mech has a top speed of at least 92 kph; concentrate on targeting the trucks at Point Able quickly so you can turn toward Point Baker quickly; and don't allow anything to block your path.

When the Centurions are destroyed, return to Point Able as quickly as possible. Your lancemates will be there, fighting off a pair of Mad Cats and an Awesome. Lend your fire and destroy these 'Mechs.

Figure 10-7. Lend fire support to destroy the Mad Cats and Awesome.

When all the 'Mechs in the area are gone, order your MFBs to the spot labeled "Repair," and meet them there. Fully repair all your 'Mechs.



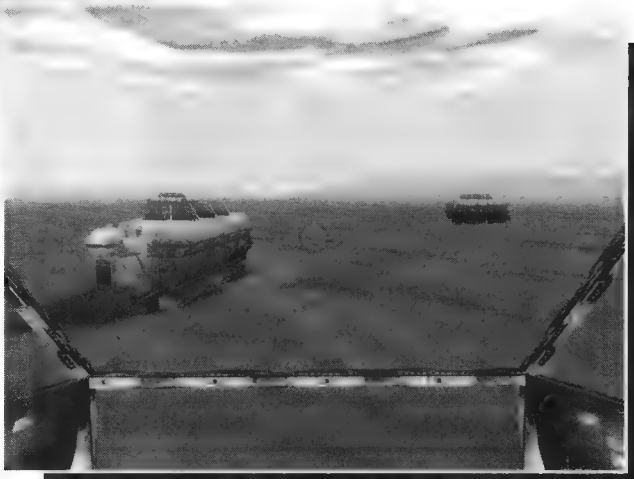


Figure 10-8. Fully repair your 'Mechs before marching on Point Charlie.

When repairs are done, move slowly north with your lancemates, following the path on the Battle Map. Target the two Missile Turrets near Point Charlie as soon as they appear on radar. Your lancemates, armed with Clan ER PPCs and Clan ER Large Lasers, will take them out from long range.

Then target the Daishi at Point Charlie. Stake out a spot just about 900 meters away from the Daishi and allow your lancemates to attack with their long-range weapons. Run back and forth to avoid damage. Either pick the Daishi and Masakari apart from long range in this way, or order your lancemates in to directly attack the Daishi if you're starting to take damage. Then approach the Daishi and Masakari, staying slightly behind your lancemates, and gun them both down with concentrated laser fire.

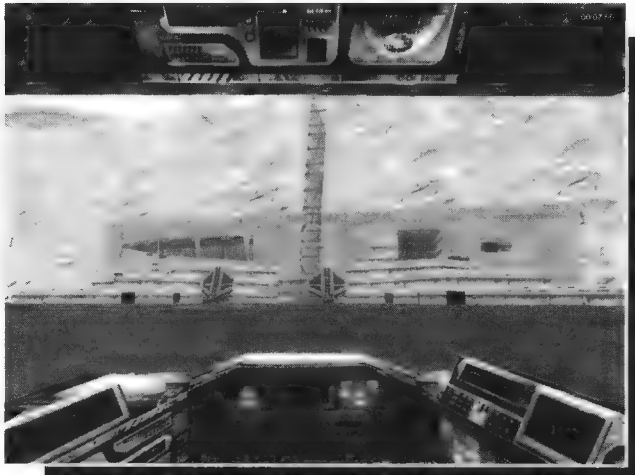
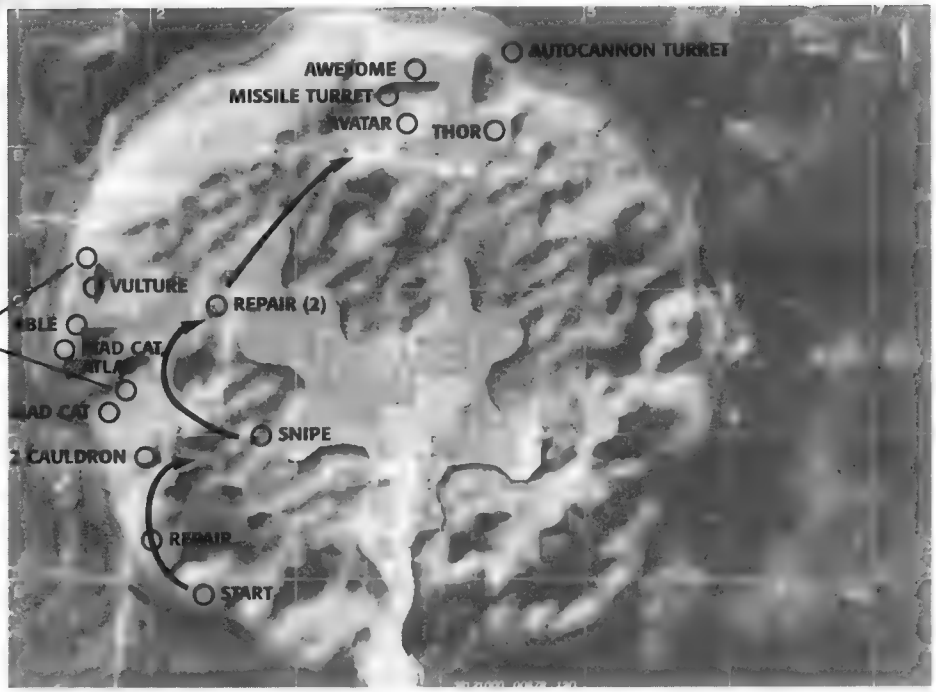


Figure 10-9. Destroy the base of the support beam that's targeted here.

When both 'Mechs are down, target the support beam at Point Charlie and blast it to pieces to win the mission. (Your lancemates may have already done this, in which case you'll automatically win when the Daishi and Masakari fall.)

MISSION 9



For a welcome change of pace, you won't have to defend anything in this mission. Rather, this is a straightforward beat-'em-up mission that requires you to destroy every enemy on the map. The key to this mission is patience and a good, solid combat technique. Make sure to get your lancemates involved and repair your 'Mechs regularly, and you should do just fine.

Your objectives are as follows:

- Defeat all enemy 'Mechs (Primary)
- Destroy headquarters at Point Able (Primary)
- Destroy headquarters at Point Baker (Primary)

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Take large 'Mechs; reserve the Daishi for yourself. Speed isn't crucial, but your lancemates should have a top speed at least in the low 70s, so that they can easily get from place to place.

Give your lancemates lots of ER Large Lasers, Clan or otherwise, and Clan ER PPCs. Take a big group of about nine assorted Medium Lasers for yourself, as usual, plus a trio of Clan ER Large Lasers. The Clan ER Large Lasers help you take down turrets and distant enemies.

This walkthrough assumes that you'll repair your 'Mechs whenever necessary, even at times when repair isn't mentioned in the walkthrough. Those extra repairs can often mean the difference between success and failure.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Cauldron Born
- 2 Mad Cats
- 1 Atlas
- 1 Vulture
- 2 Missile Turrets
- 2 Autocannon Turrets
- 1 Avatar
- 1 Awesome
- 1 Thor

STRATEGY

Immediately climb out of the shallow depression you start in, and order the MFBs to move to the nearest MFB Point (marked "Repair" on the Battle Map). A pair of Cauldron Born are attacking; assign your lancemates to attack one of them, then start shooting the other yourself. Stay near the repair point as you fight, and go for the legs; Cauldron Born have big, easy-to-hit legs.

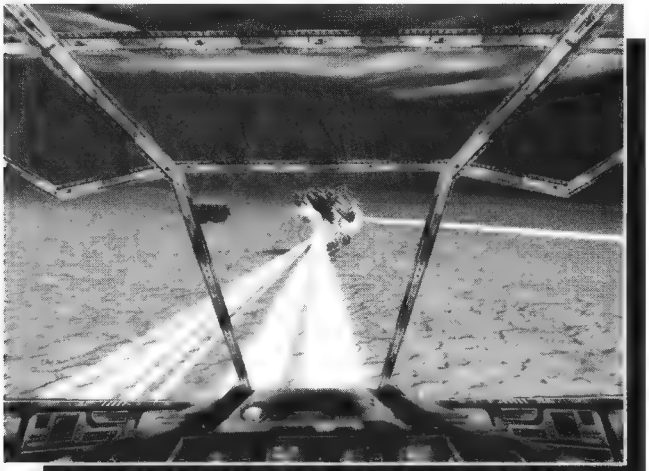


Figure 10-10. Attack the Cauldron Born quickly, to protect your MFBs.

TIP

Your MFBs will be shot at, but as long as you engage the Cauldron Born quickly, the MFBs won't be destroyed. The MFBs are only in danger if you wait too long to greet the Cauldron Born.

Shortly after the Cauldron Born are destroyed, a Mad Cat approaches from the same direction. Use your Clan ER Large Lasers to take out a Missile Turret near Point Able, then order your lancemates to attack the Mad Cat. Shoot at the Mad Cat with your Clan ER Large Lasers. Stay close to the repair point and run back and forth to avoid taking much damage.

Another Mad Cat and an Atlas are hovering near the enemy base at Point Able. However, if you followed our suggestion and stayed back while you fought the first Mad Cat, these two shouldn't come after you. You'll have some down-time now, so have all your 'Mechs repaired.

When repairs are done, slowly approach the spot marked "Snipe." Remain at this spot and allow your lancemates to pick away at the Mad Cat and Atlas with their ER PPCs. Don't order them to attack; just let them stay near you. Lend your own long-range weapons to the assault.

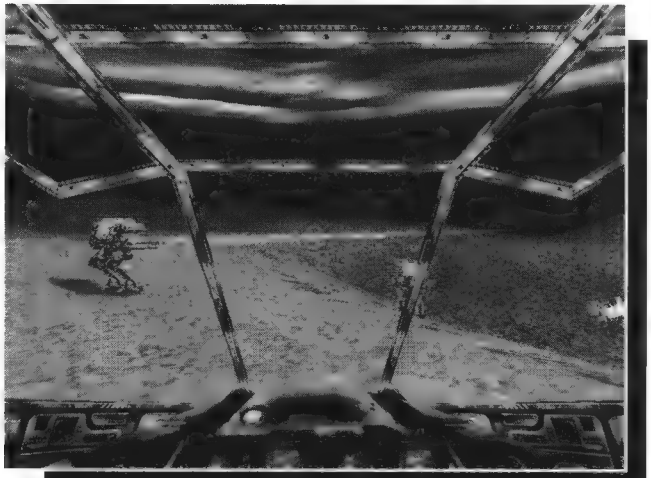


Figure 10-11. Move to a spot where your lancemates can pelt the enemy with their Clan ER PPCs. Then let them do their work.

If the Mad Cat or Atlas charges to medium range, order your lancemates to directly attack. Otherwise, just pick them apart from here, and repair again if necessary.

Approach Point Able. You'll need to destroy an Autocannon Turret and a Vulture as you approach.

When all enemies have been cleared away from Point Able, summon your MFBs to the spot labeled "Repair (2)." Repair all your 'Mechs here.

Now march northeast toward Point Baker, taking the path indicated on the Battle Map. Move cautiously. Whenever a new enemy appears, target it and blast it with your long-range weapons. The enemies near Point Baker include a trio of Autocannon Turrets, an Avatar, an Awesome, and a Thor. The enemy 'Mechs approach you in that order: Avatar, then Awesome, then Thor. Stay back and pick away at each new 'Mech as it appears, making best use of your long-range weapons.

When all 'Mechs are destroyed, one of your primary objectives is complete. In fact, *all* of your objectives are likely to be complete. That's because your lancemates probably destroyed the headquarters at Points Able and Baker while you were busy fighting. If not, just destroy all structures at both Points Able and Baker, and you'll win.

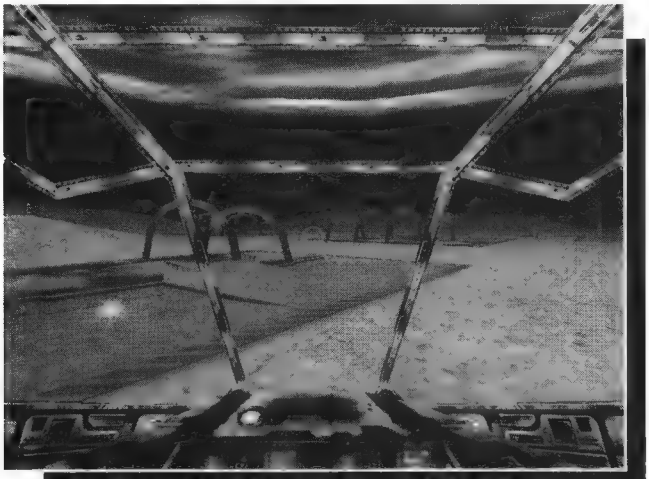


Figure 10-12. Your lancemates are likely to have destroyed the enemy headquarters—without even being ordered to.

TIP

If necessary, order your lancemates to directly attack an enemy, then retreat to the MFBs for repairs. Your lancemates can occupy the enemy while you fix your 'Mech.

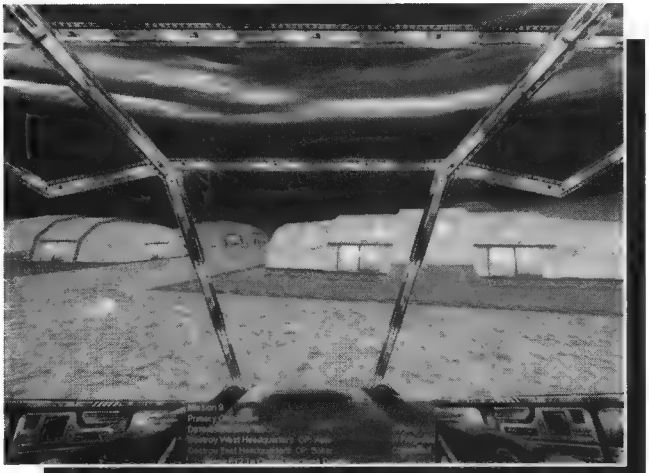
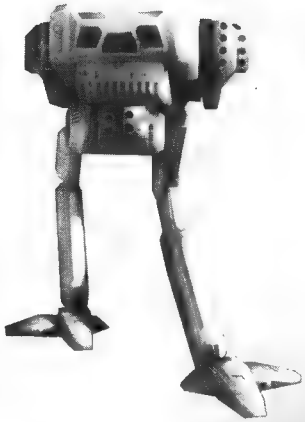
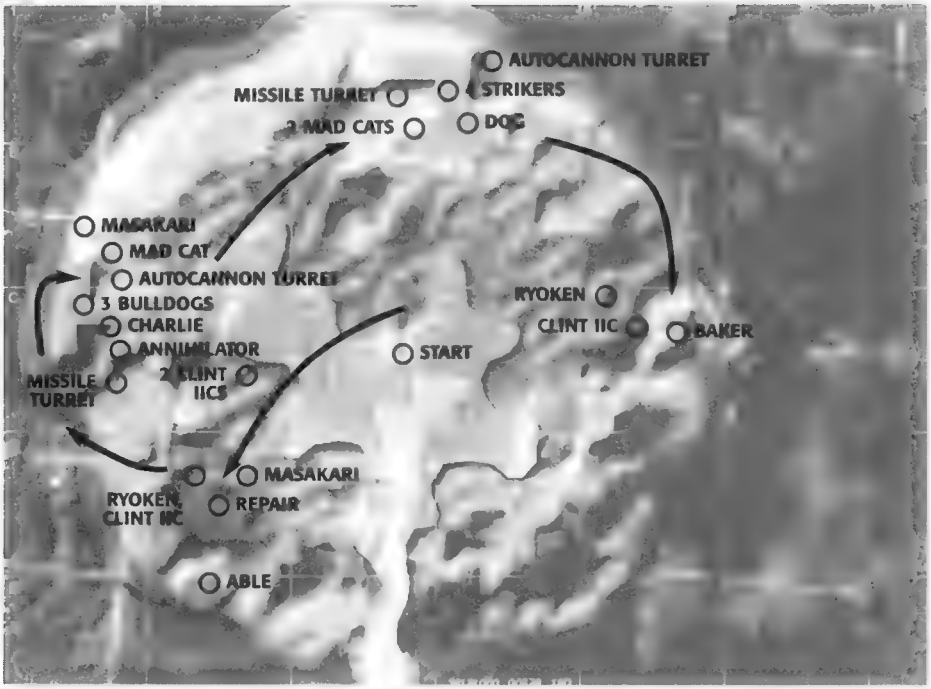


Figure 10-13. If the enemy headquarters are still intact when all enemy 'Mechs are destroyed, just blast all the structures near Points Able and Baker.



MISSION 10



The objective of this mission is to occupy all four bases on the map, simultaneously. However, this description makes the mission sound like something it's not. You *won't* be worrying too much about bases. What you *will* be doing is running for your life, then fighting off a horde of persistent attackers. Only when things have calmed down can you worry about occupying bases.

Making things difficult is the fact that you'll need every one of your lancemates to win. If anyone falls, you all fall. On High difficulty levels, therefore, it's likely that you'll have to try this mission more than once. Chances are good that a lucky shot will destroy one of your lancemates, and you'll have to start over again.

Your objectives are as follows:

- **Occupy all four bases at the same time**

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

As usual, take big 'Mechs, reserving a 100-tonner for yourself. Speed them all up so that their top speeds are at least in the high 60s.

Give your lancemates lots of Clan ER Large Lasers and Clan ER PPCs. For yourself, take a trio of Clan ER Large Lasers, and a battery of nine or so Medium Lasers or Clan ER Medium Lasers.

All 'Mechs should have full armor. Give your own 'Mech as many AMS as are available.

Be careful to give all of your lancemates' 'Mechs *similar* top speeds. If one is much faster than the other two, that 'Mech is likely to get well in front of the others and take lots of abuse when you order your lancemates to attack. You may have to actually slow down your fastest 'Mech to achieve speed parity.

Your enemies include the following:

- 4 Clint IICs
- 2 Ryoken
- 2 Masakaris
- 3 Mad Cats
- 2 Missile Turrets
- 2 Autocannon Turrets
- 3 Bulldogs
- 4 Strikers

STRATEGY

As the mission starts, immediately bring up the radar map view. Cycle through enemy targets until you've targeted a Masakari to the southwest, and then order all three of your lancemates to attack it.

Now order your MFBs to move toward the spot labeled "Repair."

When these orders have been completed, run southwest along the path drawn on the Battle Map. As you go, engage and destroy a pair of Clint IICs that are approaching from the west. After finishing them off, you may also want to take out any turrets that are visible in the west, using your Clan ER Large Lasers.

TIP

You may lose an MFB as the MFBs travel toward the repair point. That's okay; losing one MFB won't prevent you from finishing the mission.

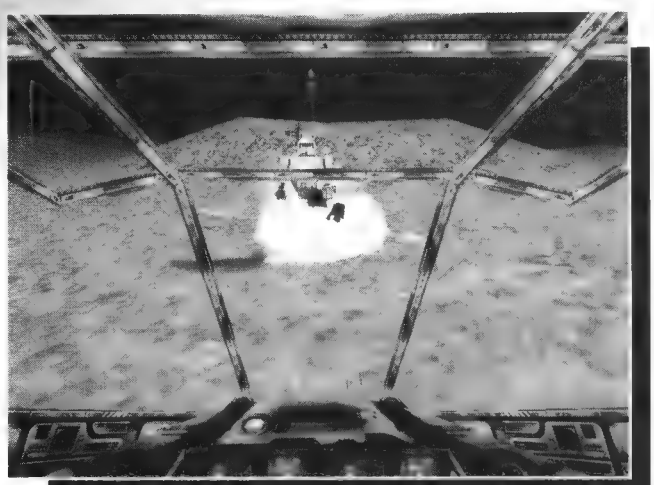


Figure 10-14. Concentrate on taking down the nearby Clint IICs.

TIP

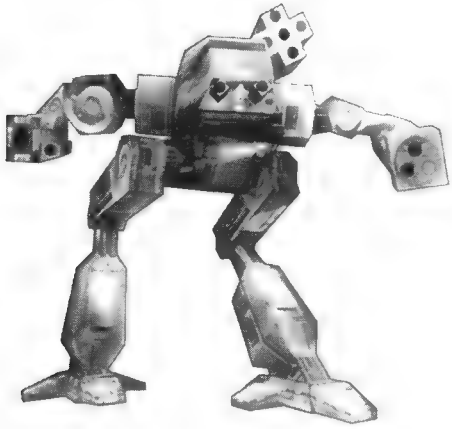
There are other enemies on the radar, especially to the north and northwest, but you should ignore them for now. Just go after the enemies that we mention.

Also, don't worry too much about following the path on the Battle Map. Just work your way south as you fight, and try to end up near the repair spot.

When the Clint IICs have fallen, keep moving south, toward the area where your lancemates are engaging the Masakari. Another Clint IIC and a Ryoken will appear in this area. Engage these two small 'Mechs and destroy them quickly, while your lancemates continue to battle the Masakari.

Finish off both small 'Mechs and then the Masakari, if your lancemates haven't managed to destroy it. Then proceed south until you're standing at the spot marked "Repair." Stand on the small ridge here, slightly to the north of your remaining MFBs, and attack incoming foes with your long-range weapons.

An Annihilator is likely to approach from the northwest; stand in place and blast it with Clan ER Large Lasers and Clan ER PPCs. Your lancemates will help.



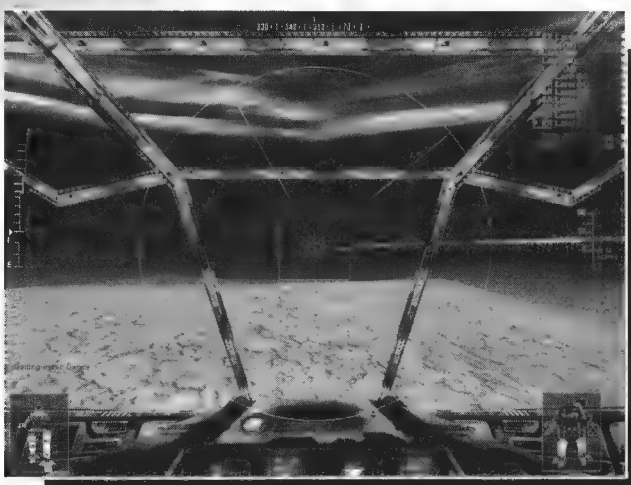


Figure 10-15. Snipe at incoming foes from a ridge near the repair spot.

Have your most damaged 'Mechs repair in the MFBs while the rest stand watch nearby. Three Bulldogs in the vicinity of Point Charlie may be visible from here; destroy them if possible. Also, if you wait long enough, a Mad Cat and a Masakari may approach from the north. Again, just stay here and use your long-range weapons to tear them apart. Use the MFBs for repairs just as soon as anyone starts to get damaged.

After waiting for several minutes near the repair spot without any foes attacking, you can assume that no more are coming. March northwest along the path designated on the Battle Map. As you approach Point Charlie, target any remaining turrets and Bulldogs in the vicinity. Soon you'll have cleared out the whole base.

Return to the MFBs if any 'Mech is seriously damaged. Otherwise, summon the MFBs to the MFB Point nearest Point Charlie.

Repair your 'Mechs fully, then slowly advance toward Point Dog. There are likely to be two Mad Cats left there, plus a Missile Turret, an Autocannon Turret, and four Strikers. We recommend advancing just far enough to lure out one of the Mad Cats, then retreating and destroying it with long-range weapons. Repeat this process with the other enemies, repairing at the MFBs whenever necessary.

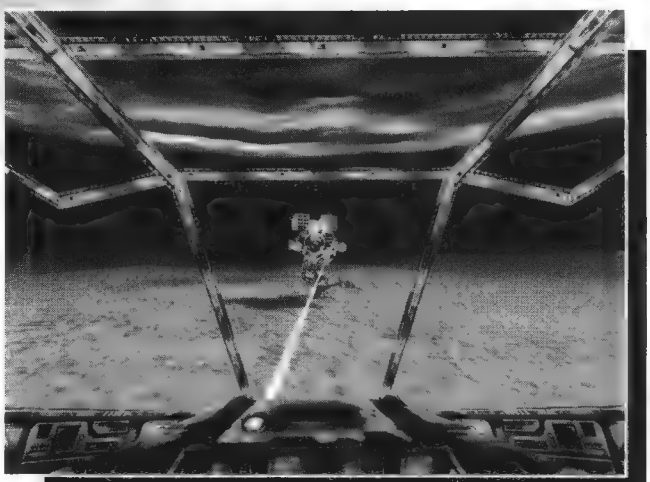


Figure 10-16. Don't advance this close to the Mad Cats. Instead, reveal one of them on radar and then back away, shooting it with your potent long-range weapons.

TIP

Be patient. Never advance too far toward the enemy, and repair your 'Mechs constantly. Remember that you can't afford to lose *any* lancemates!

Now send the MFBs to the MFB Point nearest Point Dog. Advance to the MFB Point. A single Ryoken from Point Baker is likely to run out and greet you. As usual, destroy it with long-range fire. Repair fully in the MFBs.

Advance on Point Baker. A Clint IIC is likely to be the only resistance. Blast it and proceed to Point Baker.

At this point, all enemies have been cleared from the map. All that remains is to place one 'Mech inside each base simultaneously.

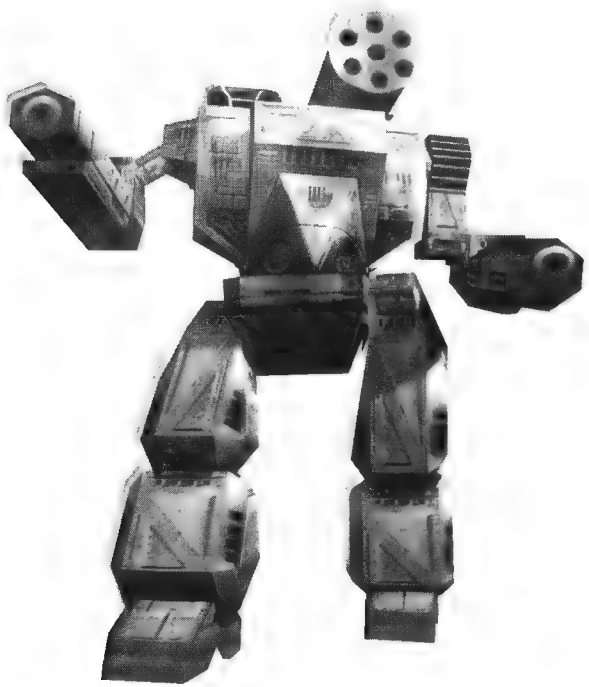
Start with Point Baker. Cycle through your Op Points, until Point Baker is selected. Look around; you'll see a green target on the ground, indicating Point Baker. Walk very close to this point, and your lancemates will follow. Select one lancemate and order him or her to Hold Position near the target. Then go north to Point Dog, with your two remaining lancemates following you.

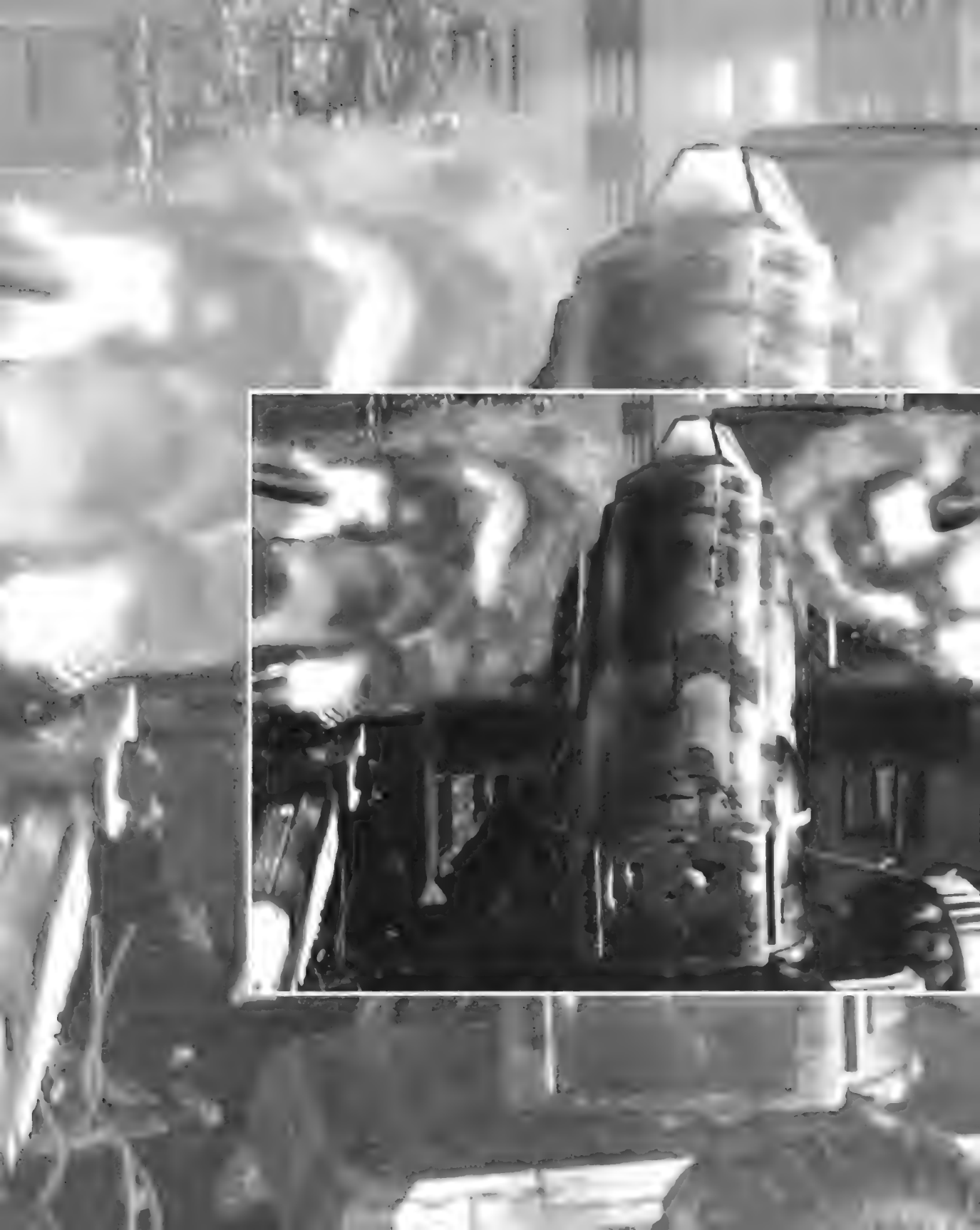
Figure 10-17. Order one lancemate to Hold Position at each of the following Points: Baker, Charlie, and Dog. Then visit Point Able to complete the mission.

At Point Dog, do the same thing: Select Point Dog so that the green target shows on the ground, then order a lancemate to Hold Position near that target.

Take your one remaining lancemate to Point Charlie and have him or her Hold Position there.

Finally, walk south to Point Able. As you approach the target indicating Point Able, you'll win. Congratulations! The mission—and the entire pirate campaign—is a success.





CHAPTER 11
MULTIPLAYER TIPS

IT'S DIFFICULT TO ADVISE you on multiplayer games, because they're highly unpredictable environments. With so many potential variations in rules and play styles, we can't give you a simple recipe for success. What we *can* provide, however, are general guidelines for improving your game. Success is still largely up to your individual skills, but we can provide you a sense of what to expect and how to improve. The rest is up to you—and will come only with experience.

WHAT TO EXPECT

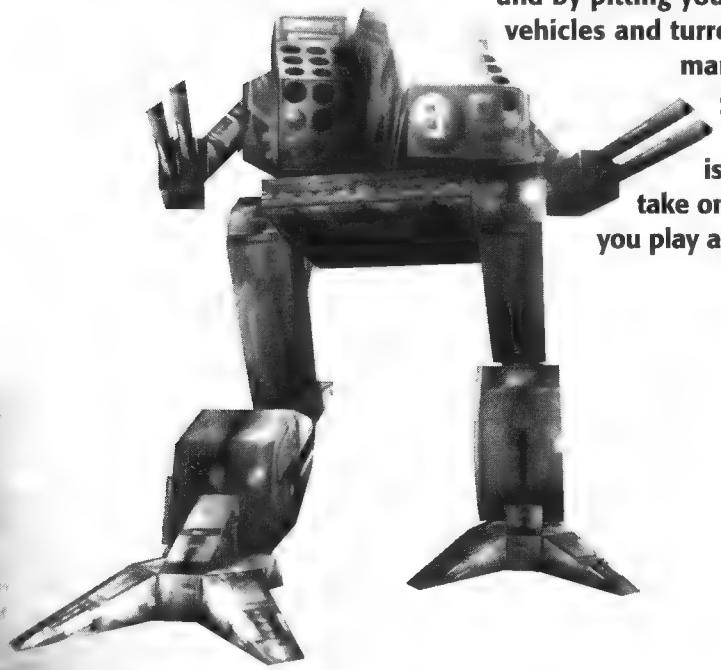
If you're used to single-player games, your first few attempts at multiplayer can be a rude awakening. Multiplayer games are very different in pace and character from single-player missions, and they require a somewhat different set of skills than single-player missions. Here's a look at what to expect when you start playing against fellow humans.

EXPECT PROFICIENCY

The first thing to expect is skill. If you're playing with friends, then you probably have a good idea what you're getting into. But if you're playing online, or against people you aren't that familiar with, you can expect a fairly high level of play. People gravitate toward games they're good at, and good players tend to play frequently because they like the feeling of winning. Thus, as you play online, you're likely to encounter skilled players.

Expect this high level of play, and expect to take a while to adjust. If you start playing multiplayer games and expect to win as consistently as you did in the single-player campaign, you'll have a rough time. Single-player missions skew battles in your favor by providing you (but not your enemies) with MFBs, and by pitting you against multiple small enemies (like vehicles and turrets) rather than a few heavy hitters. Also, many pilots you'll face in the single-player game aren't particularly good shots.

All these factors can give you an unrealistic sense of how many enemies you can take on at once, which you'll have to revise as you play against human enemies.



EXPECT A FEW TOUGH ENEMIES

Figure 11-1. A few tough enemies, like this Daishi, are common in multiplayer—as opposed to the small vehicles and turrets found in single-player missions.

You should expect fewer enemies in multiplayer games than in single-player missions, but these enemies will be significantly harder to kill than foes in single-player missions. Your enemies have chosen 'Mechs that suit their style of play, customized these 'Mechs exactly the way they want them, and will pilot the 'Mechs in a way that plays to their strengths.

In single-player games, you'll occasionally notice the computer-controlled enemy doing something silly, like walking right into an ambush or allowing you to fight them at long range when they're piloting 'Mechs with lots of short-range weapons. This sort of error is less common when you're facing experienced human enemies.

EXPECT SPECIALIZATION

Figure 11-2. This 'Mech, with its high-speed and Clan ER-PPCs, is specialized for long-range, hit-and-run tactics.

Human players understand that they need to deal quick knockout punches before their enemies do the same to them. The easiest way to load up on power is to specialize in a particular range and then fight at that range. A 'Mech sporting weapons for all possible ranges usually won't be able to kill anything quickly at any range. On the other hand, a 'Mech with all

weapons geared toward one range may be limited, but it can deliver a solid punch at the range it's specialized in.

> **TIP**
>
> As you fight your enemies, try to determine what sort of weapons they're using and, therefore, at what range they'll try to fight. Ideally, you should be able to foil the enemy by getting closer—or farther away—than the range their weapons are geared for.

GAMES VARY WITH PLAYERS

Every game is different because every opponent has a slightly different style of fighting. If you're always playing against strangers, you'll have to develop a general style that's universally effective—but if you always play with the same group, you'll eventually learn each opponent's tendencies.

Whereas games against strangers tend to emphasize fundamental skills and tactics, games between players who are familiar with one another can feature elaborate measures and counter-measures, in which one player may take a particular weapon or system to foil the weapon or system that he knows another player tends to rely upon. For example, if a player always uses missiles, the other players might start to load up on an excessive amount of AMS to neutralize him. If one player uses ER PPCs and a Targeting Computer to help with aiming, the others might pick ECM suites to neutralize the Targeting Computer.

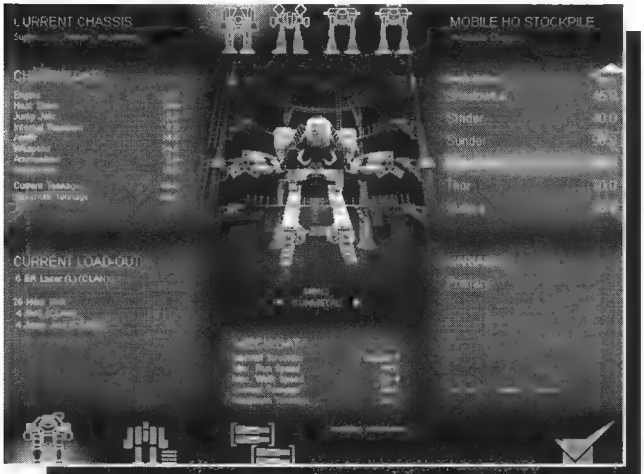
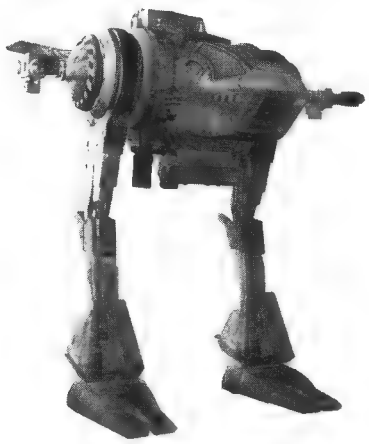


Figure 11-3. This 'Mech, with its four AMSs, is a direct response to a player who always uses lots of missiles.



TRICKERY MATTERS

Trying to deceive or fake out your enemies in the single-player campaign is generally nonproductive; you're better off just trying to kill them outright. In multiplayer games, however, trickery can be of value.

Shutting down your 'Mech is a classic piece of trickery. As you play more and more multiplayer games, you'll realize how much players rely on their radar to locate their foes. Shutting down your 'Mech allows you to effectively hide—especially when you have an ECM suite, which nullifies the effects of the Beagle Active Probe.

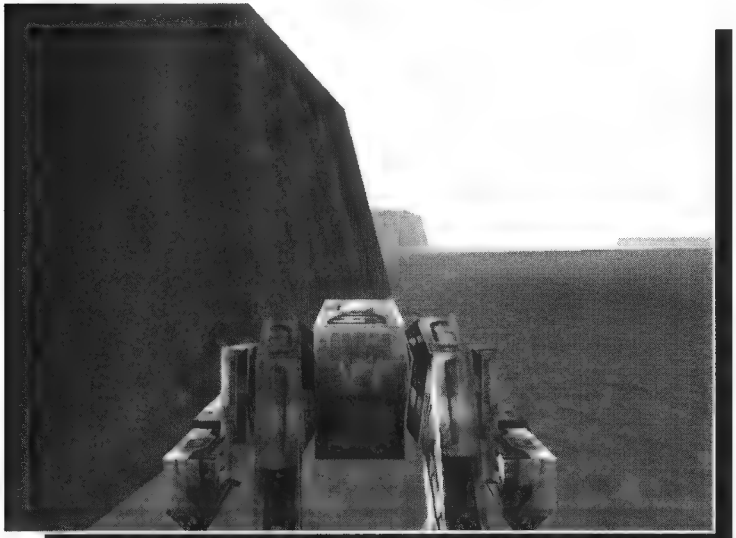


Figure 11-4. This shut-down 'Mech is hard to see on radar.

Hiding isn't too useful in very small games, because your enemies can keep track of you in such environments. But in larger games, you can often hide behind a hill and shut down, then wait for the enemy to wander into view, oblivious to your presence. That's the time to strike.

HOW TO IMPROVE

Now that you know some of the key differences between single-player and multiplayer games, you're probably wondering how to improve in multiplayer. Much of your success will depend on your combat skills and the ability to handle your 'Mech under pressure, both of which will improve with experience. But here are some strategies that will start you in the right direction.

BEAT THE SINGLE-PLAYER CAMPAIGN

Beat the single-player game on at least Medium difficulty before tackling multiplayer. Although some skills from the single-player campaign don't translate to multiplayer, the basics of handling your 'Mech and your weapons are essential.

If you're good enough to beat the single-player game, chances are good that you'll be able to handle multiplayer. If the campaign is difficult for you, on the other hand, keep practicing. You're likely to take a beating in multiplayer until you refine your single-player skills.

UNDERSTAND THE RULES

Just as you should pay close attention to the briefing in single-player missions, you should make an effort to pay attention to the rules of engagement in multiplayer games. Take note of things like the size of the game, teams, and whether MFBs are available.

In a large game, where there are multiple 'Mechs on the battlefield at once, you can play fast and loose, looking for choice opportunities such as enemies so distracted that you can sneak up and finish them off before they notice you. Small games, on the other hand, allow players to keep close track of all enemies at all times, so your chances of netting this type of easy kill diminish. Instead, you'll need to concentrate on sticking to advantageous terrain for your particular 'Mech type, and not making serious tactical mistakes.

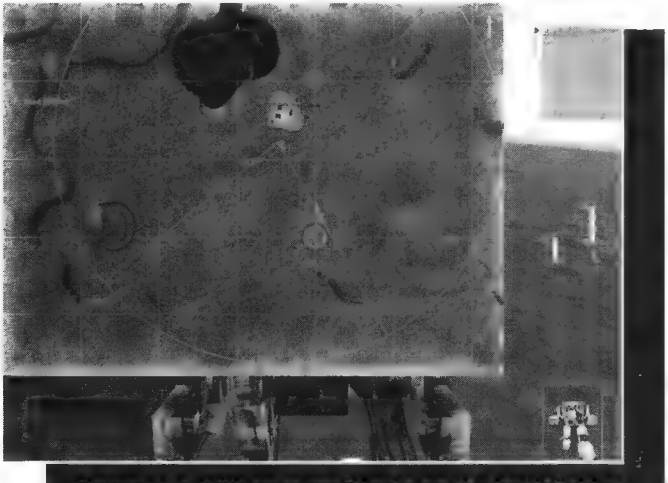


Figure 11-5. With so many 'Mechs on the battlefield at once, you'll be able to sneak around and occasionally surprise someone.

Similarly, a multiplayer game where every player's for himself must be played differently from a team game. Team games usually require you to stick close to your teammates so you can concentrate your fire. Free-for-all combat allows you to roam and encourages you to stay near the periphery of fights, where you're less likely to take serious damage than in the middle.

A good grasp of the rules, and the implications of those rules, will go a long way toward success.

KNOCKOUT PUNCHES ARE KING

You can't afford to do things halfway in multiplayer games. Use large weapons that deal heavy hits, such as Ultra Autocannon 20s or clusters of weapons that can be group-fired for excellent damage (such as massive groups of Medium Lasers). Slow-acting or imprecise weapons won't get you very far.

Recommended multiplayer weapons include heavy Autocannons, Clan ER PPCs, large groups of Medium Lasers or Medium Pulse Lasers, Gauss Rifles, and large groups of Flamers. Flamers can be particularly effective at short range, but you need to have a 'Mech with lots of heat sinks and you need to use at least five of them simultaneously.

Not recommended are any small weapons that aren't clustered in large groups and heavy-tonnage, low-damage weapons like Autocannon 2s.

TAKE FAST, EFFICIENT 'MECHS

You want your 'Mech to be in top shape when you play in a multiplayer game. Read Chapter 4 and follow the instructions on maximizing the use of tonnage and critical spaces so that nothing is wasted.

Also, realize that speed is important in multiplayer games. An Annihilator is heavily armored, but it's slow—and in a multiplayer game, your enemies will be so well armed that they can tear through your leg or torso in just a few moments. It's important, therefore, to have enough speed to make at least *some* enemies miss.

TIP

This Mad Cat has a potent combination of high tonnage and high speed. Strive to use 'Mechs of this caliber in multiplayer games.

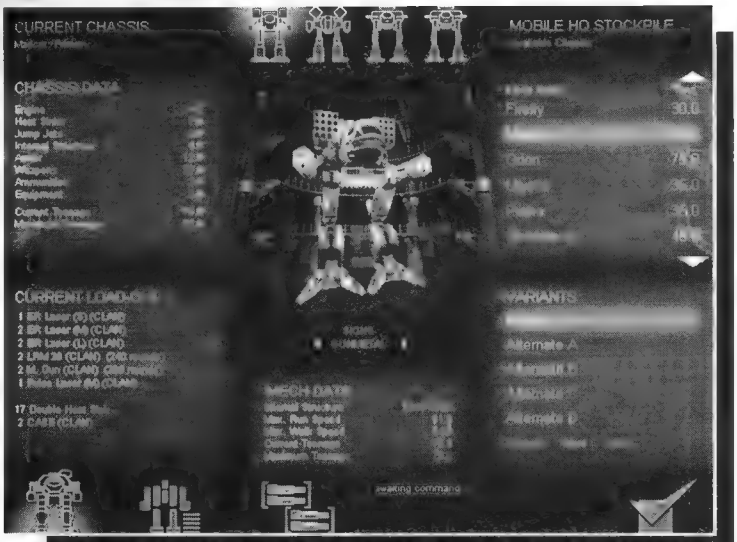


Figure 11-6. The Mad Cat's combination of speed and tonnage is ideal for multiplayer games.

You also may want to add jump jets to your 'Mech. Jump jets are extremely useful for getting out of a pinch in multiplayer games—especially when you're in a crowd and multiple enemies are targeting you. Jumping makes you very hard to hit. Plus, in a free-for-all environment, many opponents will simply stop targeting a jumping opponent and instead go after land-based enemies that are easier to hit. Finally, you'll probably want a 'Mech that can torso twist. Always select 'Mechs that are capable of torso twisting, then locking the targeting reticule to the center of the screen. (Do this by selecting the default mouse and keyboard configuration under Options, then pressing Ctrl + Number pad 0 simultaneously while in the game.) This allows you to freely rotate the 'Mech's torso just by moving the mouse, thus allowing easy circle fighting.

DISTRACTION IS ESSENTIAL

When playing multiplayer games, be an opportunist. Because both your 'Mech and your opponents' are likely to be armed so heavily that a split second can make the difference in battle, any distraction you can capitalize on is good. Approach two enemies that are fighting and pick on one of them while he's distracted. Leap out from behind obstacles when your target is situated between several enemies; he's likely to be concerned about threats other than you, so he may not be aware of you.

Figure 11-7. Foes that are distracted, either by your lancemates or by another enemy, are easy marks.

Pay attention to the direction your enemies are facing. When you target them, the target display shows you what direction they're looking in relation to you. Use this information to your advantage, initiating the attack when your opponent is looking away.

TIP

Because massive weapon attacks can cause knockdowns, those split-second advantages really add up. Knock an enemy down while he's not looking, and you'll get lots of free shots at him while he tries to get back up. You should usually be able to finish off a knocked-down opponent before he gets all the way back up.

MINIMIZE ENEMIES

One principle from the single-player campaign that holds true in multiplayer is that you should try to fight only one enemy at once. Moreover, you should try to put yourself in situations where you're likely to be undisturbed while you fight. Having a third party charge in and attack you while you're concentrating on your original enemy is especially lethal and should be avoided at all times.

How can you stay out of multi-party combat? It's not always avoidable, but the most common ways are:

- Try not to get surrounded. If you're surrounded, move at full speed to an area where you aren't.
- Stay near the edge of the map. This naturally prevents you from being surrounded, as enemies can't come in from the edge.
- Don't initiate a fight in a crowded area. If a third party can get a clean shot at you within a few seconds of your initiating a fight, you should run away instead.
- Use large terrain features like steep hills to block enemies on one or more sides.

You'll find that you fight badly when there are multiple targets; there's just too much to deal with. Even just the threat of extra enemies in the vicinity can sometimes distract you enough to make you lose.

Remember this principle, and realize that it's merely the flip side of the "Distraction is Essential" tip mentioned earlier. Your foes have just as many problems dealing with multiple targets as you do, so if you can attack them (or just snipe at them from long range) while they're occupied, you'll stand a good chance of winning.

WATCH GOOD PLAYERS

This final suggestion isn't always easy, but it can be extremely valuable: If you get a chance to watch a good player in action, do so. You can learn a lot from this if you actively consider what the player is doing to succeed, and constantly compare it to what you'd have done in the same situation. This is especially valuable if there's one person in your normal play group that consistently beats everyone else. Watch this person and see what he or she does to succeed.

If you can't physically stand near the good player's computer, you can still learn a lot just by being observant in combat. If you keep getting attacked without warning, start watching the radar more and try to figure out where the surprise attacks are coming from. If an enemy with a similar 'Mech keeps gunning you down, pay close attention and try to figure out what he's doing better: Is he moving more? Using jump jets? Using different weapons? You can tell—just by looking at the projectiles in the air—what sort of weapons are being used against you, and then try to use the same weapons in your own 'Mech design.

KEEP PRACTICING

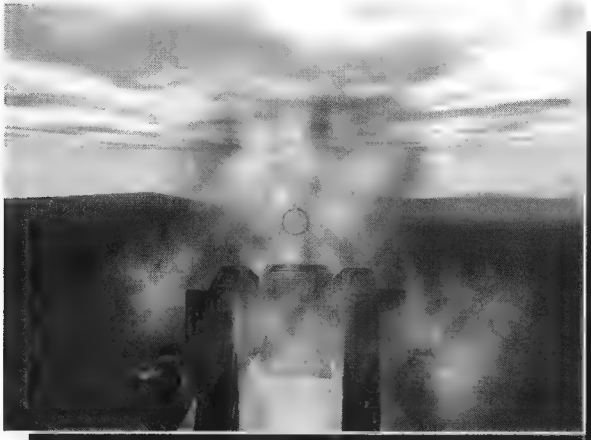
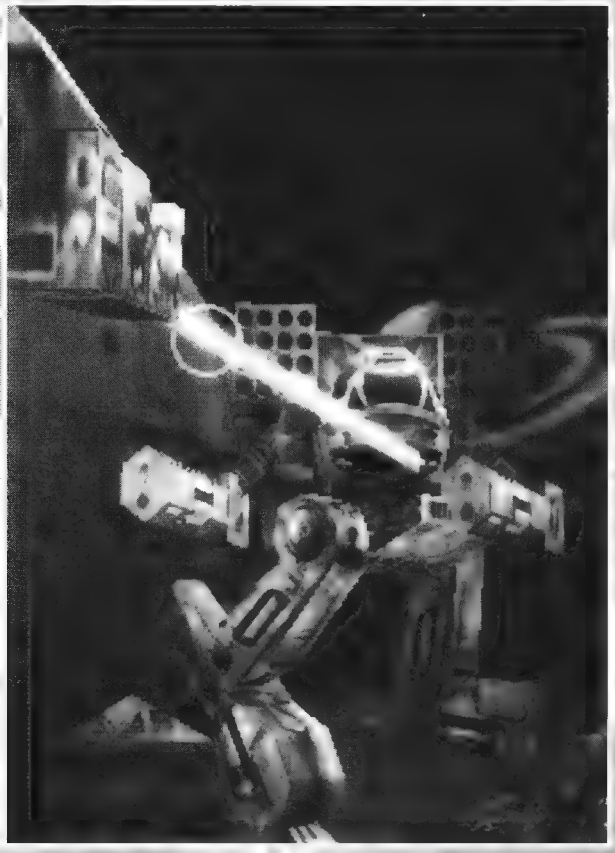


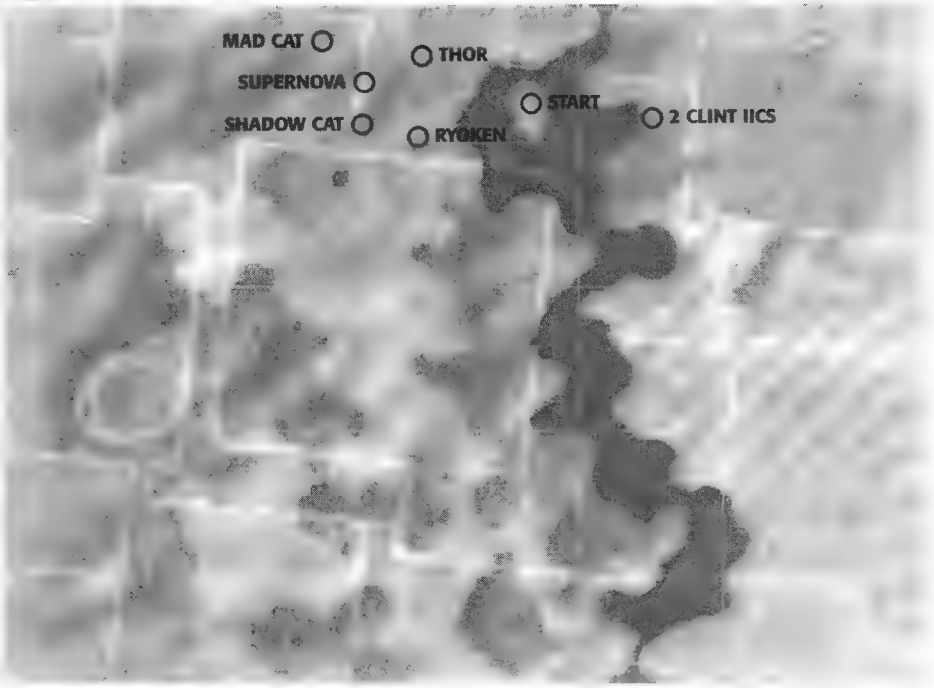
Figure 11-8. Try to figure out what's happening, even when you're getting beaten.

It may seem that you've got the game figured out after a few multiplayer sessions, but there's always something more to learn. These discoveries are often subtle, like the difference between Gauss Rifles and ER PPCs, or a preference for a particular part of a map. If you continue to play against opponents that are at or slightly above your skill level, and refrain from constantly playing against beginners, you'll be sure to learn more and more as you play.

BONUS MISSION



IF YOU BEAT the entire campaign *and* all the pirate missions, a bonus mission appears. The bonus mission is somewhat bizarre, and shouldn't be considered part of either campaign. In it, you play Sinclair, and you're stranded on a rock in the middle of a chasm. A parade of enemies (including your former lance-mates) attacks you as you stand on the rock. If you kill them all, you win. If they kill you, you lose.



You can't take jump jets along on this mission, so you can't leave the rock. This makes the mission very simple: You won't be able to move around much, so you just need to take good weapons and shoot very accurately.

You have only one objective:

- Survive!

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Take one of the available 100-ton 'Mechs. Give it four or five AMS and full armor. Lower the engine size if necessary to accommodate everything you want. Speed doesn't matter because you really can't go anywhere.

We recommend loading up on extremely potent long-range weapons. We used two Clan ER Large Lasers, two standard ER Large Lasers, and one Heavy Large Laser. We group-fired these five weapons. This resulted in a shutdown after every shot (due to extreme heat) but because we stood still throughout most of the mission, and because the shutdown only lasted about as long as it took for the weapons to recharge themselves, this wasn't much of a problem.

Your enemies include the following:

- 2 Clint IICs
- 1 Ryoken
- 1 Shadow Cat
- 1 Thor
- 1 Supernova
- 1 Mad Cat

STRATEGY

Hey, there's not much we can say about this one. There are no clever tactics to be used; there's nowhere to go and nothing to do except shoot your enemies as quickly as they appear. You'll do best at this mission if you're highly accurate.

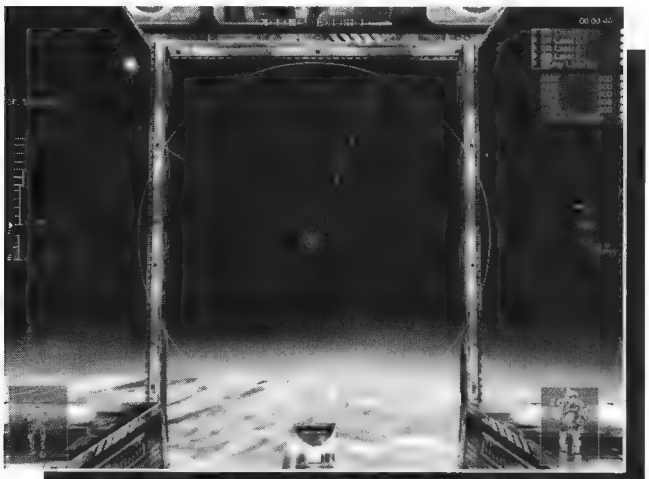


Figure A-1. Just aim and shoot. It's a test of raw gunnery skill.

Moving around on the rock will help you avoid a few shots, but not many. You may just want to stand still and act as a turret.

Your enemies appear in the following order:

- Two Clint IICs, from the east
- One Ryoken, from the west (after a short delay)
- Epona Rhi in a Shadow Cat and Alan Mattilla in a Thor, both from the west (after a very short delay)
- Scourge in a Supernova, from the west (after the others are all destroyed)
- Susie Ryan in a Mad Cat, from the west (after Scourge is destroyed)

One piece of advice: When Alan and Epona show up, shoot Alan's Thor first. It's a bigger and slower target, and it packs more weaponry.

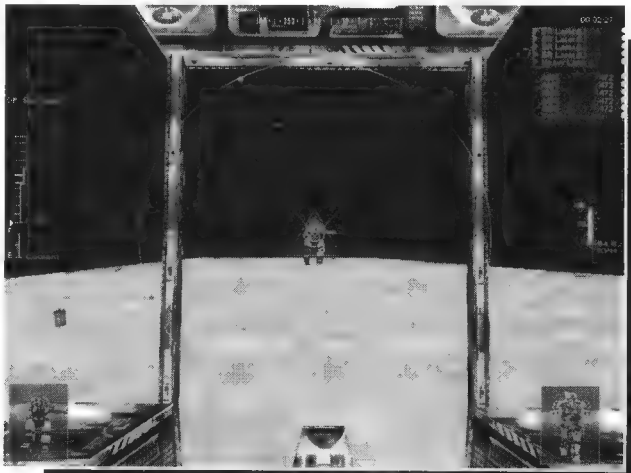
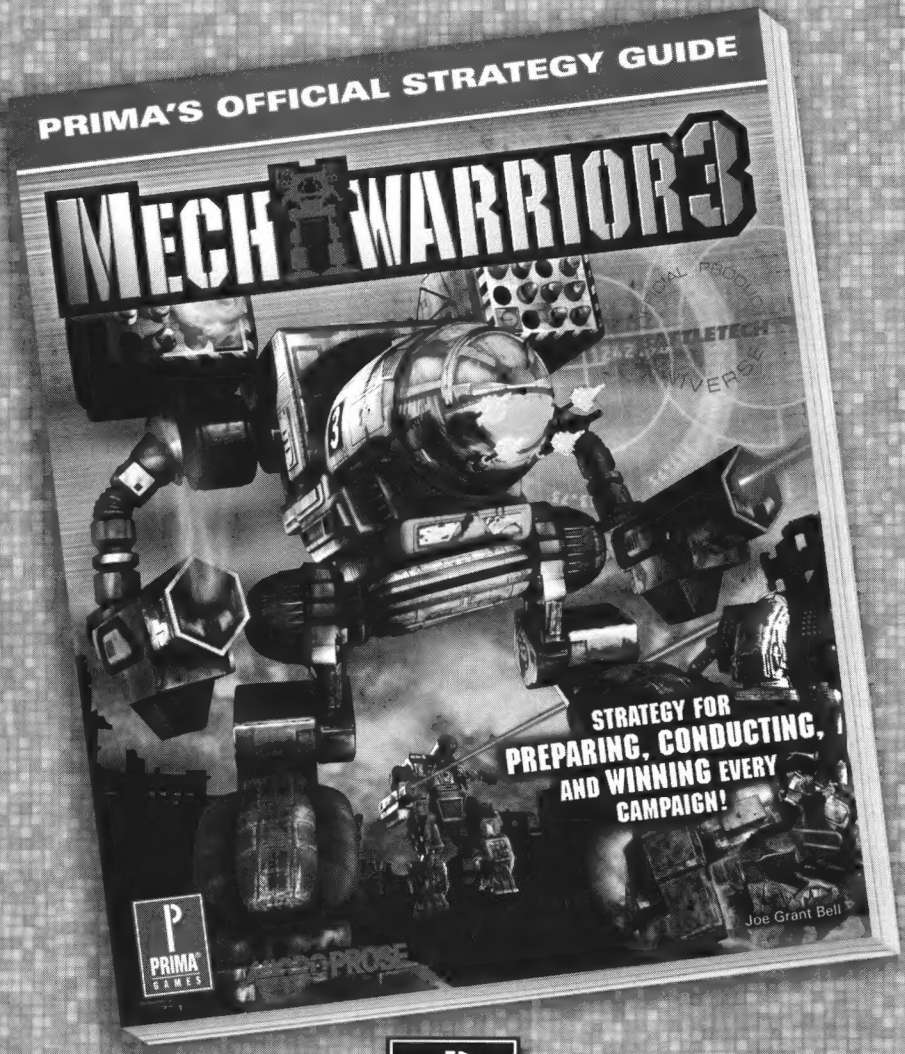


Figure A-2. Some of your foes, like this Thor, will eventually use jump jets to get close to you. Take them out quickly.

Frustrated? Don't be. We couldn't beat this mission on High difficulty. We had a heck of a time trying to beat it on Medium difficulty. Only at Low difficulty could we consistently beat this thing, and even then, we had to be pretty accurate. Since we were able to beat every other mission in the game at High difficulty, this one stands out as the absolute hardest.

Our recommendation is to try it at Low difficulty, and not to worry about the higher difficulty levels—unless you have a real appetite for pain.

Have fun!



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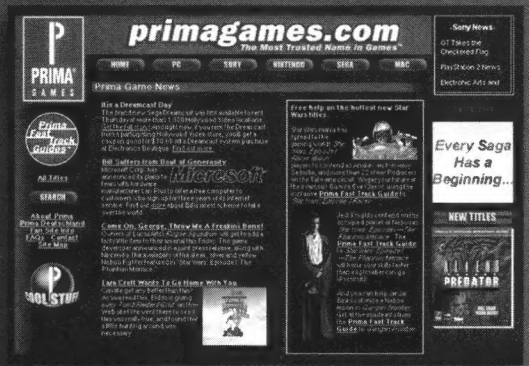

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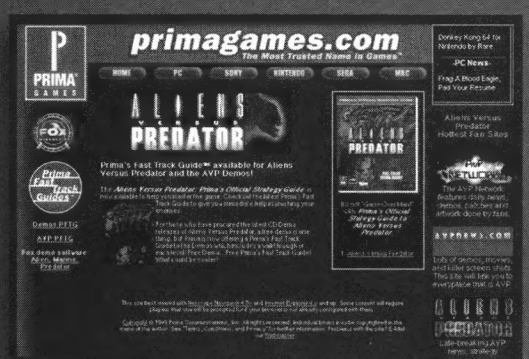

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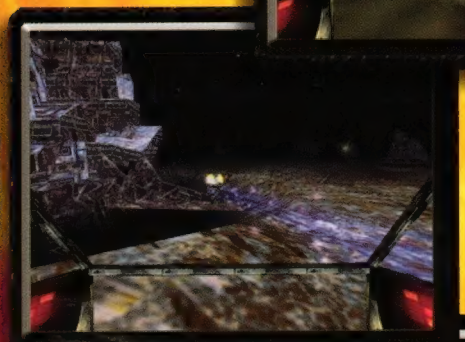

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